

CLASSIC HORROR BY ALGERNON BLACKWOOD

Rod Serling's

JUNE 1985 \$2.50

THE

# TWILIGHT ZONE

Magazine

**Roger Zelazny:  
A Vampire's Feast**

**Show-by-Show  
Guide to TV's  
'Night Gallery'**



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**Killers Stalk the Dark in 'Jungle Eyes'**

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# INSPIRATIONS

Several years ago, introducing Robert Sheckley as our temporary book reviewer, I pointed out that he was "the first science fiction writer ever to have inspired a new flavor of ice cream." (The flavor was the short-lived "Condorman Crunch"—not bad, actually—which Baskin-Robbins brought out at the time of the Disney movie *Condorman*, based on a novel of Sheckley's.)

And for all I know, ROGER ZELAZNY may well be the first science fiction writer ever to have inspired a prizewinning case of plagiarism. According to the January 12 *New York Times*, "A 16-year-old honor student agreed to return a \$1,000 prize for a short story that he originally said he had written but that he later admitted was the work of Roger Zelazny, a prizewinning author."

"The student, Phil Broder, said Thursday, after he was confronted by his father and school officials, that he had lifted his story, 'The George Business,' about a lovesick knight and a cynical dragon, from *Universe Variations*, a collection by Mr. Zelazny that was published in 1983."

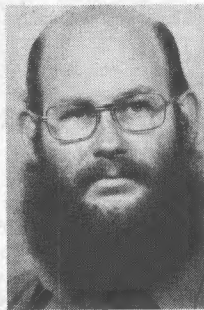
"The admission came after the story was printed in the *Detroit Free Press* Thursday and readers called to say it was Mr. Zelazny's."

Zelazny's own prizes (won fairly and squarely, I hasten to add) include a shelfload of well-deserved Hugos and Nebulas—the very awards that STANLEY SCHMIDT scrutinizes, and ultimately defends, in his "Viewpoint" essay on page 20. Both writers have appeared in these pages before, Zelazny with "And I Only Am Escaped to Tell Thee" (TZ May '81), Schmidt with "Camouflage" (July '81) and the touching "Tweedlioop" (November '81), a sort of Ur-E.T. It was Schmidt who, as the editor of *Analog*, published Timothy Zahn's "Cascade Point," the Hugo-winning novella we roasted in our last issue. (Nothing personal.) Now he gets to tell his side.

Our lead story this time, *Flying to Byzantium*, is a fiendishly disturbing horror tale set squarely in today's fantasy convention circuit, and it's written by One Who Knows, LISA TUTTLE, an expatriate Texan now living with her husband (novelist Christopher Priest) on the northwest edge of London. In the past she's



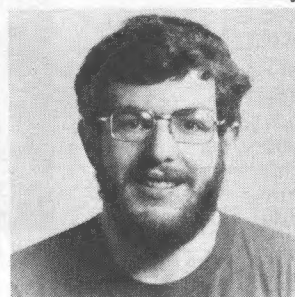
Zelazny



Schmidt



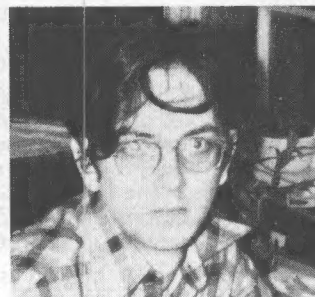
Tuttle



Di Filippo



Ashley



Schweitzer

given us interviews with such silver-tongued Brits as Colin Wilson, James Herbert, and Roald Dahl, as well as the imaginary-companion story to end all imaginary-companion stories, "A Friend in Need" (August '81, and promptly snapped up for one of the *Year's Best* anthologies). Her next book, a story collection called *A Nest of Nightmares*, will be brought out in the U.K. by Sphere; these days, however, the fiction has taken a back seat to her major project, *A Dictionary of Feminism*. (Maybe it'll explain why I find it so odd to call her simply "Tuttle," while calling male writers by their last names sounds okay.) Anyway, as we go to press, Tuttle is about to be the guest of honor at Wiscon, this year's sf convention in Madison, Wisconsin—an experience not unlike that of *Byzantium's* put-upon young heroine, although that story takes place in Texas. Tuttle insists that *Byzantium* is strictly a work of fiction, not autobiography, and adds that she remains "very fond [italics hers] of the great state of Texas, even though I don't happen to live there at the moment." I think it's safe to say that the Texas in her story is primarily a state of mind.

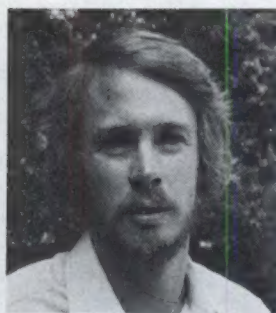
CHARLES BAXTER is one of those rare writers capable of evoking genuine terror—terror on an exceedingly grand scale, in fact—from the minutely observed events of everyday life. Clearly he's just

the man to show you fear in a handful of dust. Baxter lives in Ann Arbor and teaches at Wayne State University in Detroit. His first collection, *Harmony of the World*, was published by the University of Missouri Press. His second, *Through the Safety Net*—from which we've taken the title story—will be published this summer by Viking.

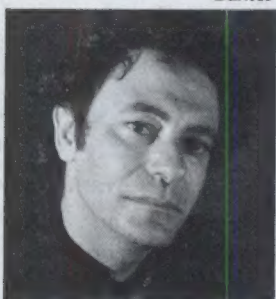
You know that PAUL DI FILIPPO is a native Rhode Islander as soon as you hear him talk. He makes his home in Providence, a great town for supernatural fantasy ever since the days of two of its most illustrious residents, H.P. Lovecraft and (more briefly) Edgar Allan Poe. Another great town for supernatural fantasy is Blackwood Beach, a highly eccentric little New England coastal community somewhere between Stonington and Cape Cod. This happy invention of Di Filippo's is the setting for a remarkable series of stories, the first of which, a summertime idyll called *Rescuing Andy*, starts on page 72. Two more tales are on the way, chronicling the mishaps of Blackwood's citizens through fall ("Yellowing Bowers") and winter ("Captain Jill"). I'd say you're in for a treat.

For now, however, the more celebrated Blackwood is still the ghost-story master himself, Algernon Blackwood, who died more than thirty years ago at the age of eighty-two, but who's been brought





Baxter



Blaine



Ryan

endearingly to life by **MIKE ASHLEY** in an ingenious "posthumous interview" based on Blackwood's letters and other writings. Ashley, author of the indispensable *Who's Who in Horror and Fantasy Fiction* (Taplinger), is currently completing a major biography of Blackwood.

**DARRELL SCHWEITZER** is, like Ashley, a wide-ranging literary historian, bibliographer, and all-round scholar of the fantasy field. He's already edited a volume of Lord Dunsany's uncollected writings (*The Ghosts of the Heavyside Layer and Other Fantasms*, Owlswick Press), is gathering material for another, and will be profiling that author—as well as the tragic Richard Middleton—in upcoming issues of *Twilight Zone*. Also in the works: a two-volume anthology of critical essays, *Discovering Modern Horror Fiction*, from Starmont House. Schweitzer's own fiction has ranged in time from antiquity to the future, from novels such as *The Shattered Goddess* (Donning) to the brief but haunting piece included here, *Jungle Eyes*.

**MICHAEL BLAINE's** last story in TZ, "Kush" (December '84)—a tale of a young man with a shriveled, somnolent twin brother embedded in his midriff—offended a few squeamish souls but proved a hit with most of our readers. *The Screening*, in this issue, seems destined to outrage many more, but its savage slapstick humor and sheer demented inventiveness

should win Blaine an even greater number of new fans.

And talk about laffs, get a load of that guy **JIM RYAN**, the hot young 6'8½" cartoonist from Hoboken who's been drawing "TZ Theater" for the past three issues. Ryan's drawings have appeared in the *Hoboken Reporter*, the *East Village Eye*, and *Screw*. You'll find his latest handiwork—at twice the normal length, no less—on page 90.

**SPIN-OFF DEPT.:** Last year's digest-size reprint magazine, *Night Cry* (which took its title from the Katherine M. Turney story it featured), proved so popular that we've decided to stick our collective foot a little further in the water by scheduling four more issues for 1985. Unlike the first, each will include new stories as well as tales from TZ's past. The format, I think, is a particularly readable one which lends itself well to horror fiction. Like the first, each new *Night Cry* will also include ten new illustrations by a single artist—all in all, a rather handsome showcase.

Copies of the premiere issue are already as scarce as hen's teeth—scarcer, in fact; we have a crate of hen's teeth on order, but we're fresh out of *Night Cry*. If you want a copy of the current issue and are unable to find it on your newsstand, send \$3.95 to *Twilight Zone*, P.O. Box 252, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0252, Dept. TED.

—TK

# Rod Serling's THE TWILIGHT ZONE Magazine

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# LETTERS

## TZ REVIVAL

Dear Editor:

"Dust off old scripts" for the revived TZ on tv? [*The Twilight Zone Returns*, April] I might wish it were that easy, but I don't think your readers would appreciate it if that were all we planned to do for the fall of '85.

On the contrary, we're assembling the hottest writing talent in America, buying the best short stories ever written, and getting ready to blow everybody right back into the Twilight Zone in a big way. Ninety percent of the material you'll be seeing on CBS next fall will be brand new. The only remakes we are planning are of those original shows which suffered somehow in execution—in other words, ones we're confident we can do better—and that ain't a lot. We may dust the scripts off before we rewrite them, but that's all.

Other than this one small carp, thanks for the coverage. We're all looking forward to giving your readers the first inside look into the new Twilight Zone between now and September.

—Philip DeGuere  
Executive Producer,  
*The Twilight Zone*

## THE 'GHOST STORY' STORY

Dear Editor:

I might be able to help you as far as documentation of the *Circle of Fear* episodes is concerned. I too remember the series, but it originally aired (at the beginning of its only season) as *Ghost Story*, with Sebastian Cabot as Winston Essex, the character/host who set the scene for every show. When the show's ratings lagged after its first thirteen weeks (Sept.-Dec. 1972), the format and Cabot/Essex were dropped, and the restructured program became *Circle of Fear*.

Only twenty-two episodes (thirteen of *Ghost Story*, nine of *Circle of Fear*) were produced. Not too many shows make it into syndication with that limited number of episodes—especially with two different names and formats. Just to be sure, I checked the 1984 edition of *The International Television Almanac*, and found that Columbia Pictures Television (the company that produced the show for NBC) doesn't even offer *Circle of Fear/Ghost Story* in its current list of syndication pack-

ages. It would take a lot of mail for them to release it again, but with the current interest in long-forgotten shows, who knows?

A list of all the episodes and their original NBC air dates can be found in Larry James Gianakos's excellent reference work, *Television Drama Series Programming: A Comprehensive Chronicle*, published by the Scarecrow Press—a four-volume work that covers all tv drama, 1947-1982.

—Barry I. Grauman  
Long Branch, New Jersey

Dear Editor:

Yes! I am answering the call for all *Circle of Fear* fans. I too would like to see these episodes again. That episode about the artists all wrapped up in their work had one hell of a painting in it. Boy would I like to have a copy of it. I take pictures off the tube of all the *Night Gallery* paintings, but I'd really like to get my hands on some prints of Tom Wright's work. Also, let's hear it for that new series, *Tales from the Dark Side*! A hell of a show. Unfortunately, last week it stopped run-



"It was like on the Twilight Zone . . . surrealistic, you know? The elevator doors opened, slow pan across doors, medium long shot of doors, reverse angle looking outside from the elevator, medium of close shot of the approaching man, different angle, close shot of man, full shot from elevator, artistic shot of odd-looking expression on man's face . . ."



# LETTERS

ning here. Hope that's only temporary!  
—Gregg Quiring  
Fresno, California

Dear Editor:

Harlan Ellison did not write any teleplays for *Circle of Fear*.

He and D.C. Fontana share story credit for the episode "Earth, Air, Fire, and Water," telecast January 19, 1973, on *Ghost Story*. D.C. Fontana wrote the final screenplay.

In *Harlan Ellison: A Bibliographic Checklist* (edited by Leslie Kay Swigart), the show is described by Ellison as a "bastardization of 'Shattered Like a Glass Goblin.'"

—David Jessup  
Elmira, New York

## MEMORY LAME

Dear Editor:

I saw the response to Jeff A. Christian's letter regarding a serial he had seen and forgotten the name of, and it struck me that a similar thing had happened to me: I saw a trilogy of horror shorts on tv some time ago, and one of them—an excellent little bit of filming—stuck in my head for years. It opened with a shot of a female corpse lying on a bed, an odd ring on its finger and a horrified expression on its face. A maid comes into the room, notices the ring, and brazenly takes it from the corpse and puts it on her own finger. Later that night it is revealed that the ring is cursed: The corpse comes back to get it from the maid! Red and green lights flash as the gruesome-looking dead woman chases the maid, who dies from fright and is later found with the same horrible expression on her face. At the end, another lady takes the ring and the cycle begins again. I found it to be a genuinely terrifying piece of work, and would like to get the details on it. If anyone could identify the movie, I'd be grateful.

—Ethan Walker  
Newton, Connecticut

## BRING BACK THE ZONE!

Dear Editor:

An open letter to Serling fans ... Are you a *Twilight Zone* junkie? Are you going cold turkey since Channel 11 (WPIX-TV in New York City) yanked it off the air in late January? If you are one who is in shock or feels a similar sense of loss, please join me in petitioning for the return of *The Twilight Zone*. You can write me at

the following address; please include your phone number.

Robin Halpin  
1641 Third Avenue  
New York, New York

## AUTHOR'S REPLY

In our February 1985 issue we published Roger Dunkley's "Twisted Shadow," at the conclusion of which a nuclear power plant explodes. Last issue reader Richard Katz wrote in, pointing out that, while he found the story otherwise delightful, "in reality, nuclear power plants do not blow up." He added that he got upset "when exploding nuclear plants seem to march off the pages of *Twilight Zone* and onto the placards of the *Clamshell Alliance*." Here Mr. Dunkley responds.

I'm flattered to have provoked so strong a response from Mr. Katz—but I think he is guilty (like my "experimental" and, therefore, fantastical, nuclear plant) of over-critical reaction! The theme in "Shadow" inheres in the contrast between the sunny garden and the appalling possibility of its nuclear pollution and devastation; the actual plot device of the experimental reactor going critical and exploding was a metaphor of pollutive destruction, a piece of narrative shorthand, conveying an underlying truth about the threat of planetary pollution, rather than a piece of surface scientific realism. Bomb or reactor: the danger of global pollution is a real one, not an unscientific superstition. I'm no political propagandist; if I were, I'd do scientific research to underpin a political treatise. But I do share contemporary fears; I want the garden of my protagonist Isobel Hurse, Our Garden, to remain sunny and fertile.

Now that it's free from natural disasters (the Black Death alluded to in the story) which science couldn't control, I want it free from the possibility, however remote, of unnatural disaster by nuclear pollution/devastation, which scientific man can yet avoid. And I'm no idyll-mongering peasant, either. I too want abundant power for all of us—but on terms we can all live with in total safety for generations.

—Roger Dunkley  
Kempston, Bedford, England

## COMPUTER ERROR

Dear Editor:

An interesting addendum to your 2010 articles—during the making of the movie, the computer HAL switched himself on, much to the puzzlement of computer experts. I'm having the opposite problem with my IBM. Sometimes it shuts down for no reason at all.

I wonder if there's a mysterious connection between the two occurrences. One can do little more than speculate, but the names of the two machines are so closely tied—H-A-L being, in each case, one letter way from I-B-M—that one certainly must wonder ...

—Joan Grove  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

## TRIVIA PURSUED

Dear Editor:

After reading *TZ Special #2*, "Trivia from the *Twilight Zone*," I think I've found a real trivia question: Name the two *Twilight Zone* episodes that are not mentioned in the *Twilight Zone* trivia book. Answer below.

—Robert Olimski  
El Paso, Texas

17 "The Shelter" and "The Fear."





BOOKS

Doc Kennedy

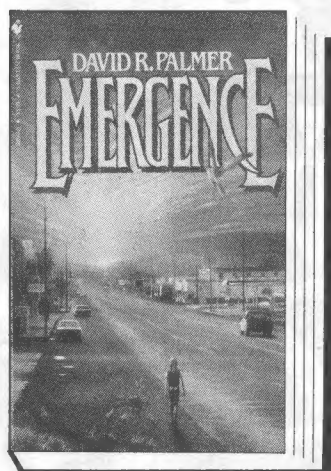
# REPORT FROM THE FRONT

Have been slogging through ichor for days. Conditions hellish. Sanity maintained through ability to skim in fast-forward mode. Herewith samples from prose-forms too alien to bring back alive.

*Item:* Giant gelatinous white worms are taking over human bodies then going into cocoon state to emerge as "part insect, part animal ... the human form made vile." Luckily, whoever wields a certain paperweight can zap them right back into the ground, doubtless into the hell from whence they came, though "in another few minutes it might have been too late." This from *The Worms* by Al Sarrantonio (Doubleday, \$11.95) So-so late-nite horror.

*Item:* When St. Patrick arrived in 832 A.D. the Fairy Folk (aided by sympathizers from Atlantis) fled Ireland for outer space, led by "St. Brendan the Astrogator," according to this source. At their arrival, "a thousand light-years from Terra," the usual castles and feudal hooah were set up. Our story starts when an exploration ship from Earth finds them. Reviewer's favorite line delivered by the Admiral of the Keltic (read Celtic) starfleet when he greets the Earth captain after three thousand years of isolation: "Another Navy man!" The Keltic planet is under the rule of a so-called "She-Wolf," i.e. the standard-issue harebrained Willful Wench of romantic novels. (Has Maggie Thatcher taught these Hibernians nothing? Let alone their own Bernadette Devlin?) The novel, *The Copper Crown* by Patricia Keneally (Bluejay, \$15.95), is a *Star Trek* episode dragged out to numbing length. The publisher promises a sequel. Begorrah!

*Item:* Gorgeous gal ("There was a presence about her, a grace; no, an impression of unrivaled loveliness") is bad news to men from Raj India to Victorian London to steamy Savannah. She's not a vampire, but, worse, a *lamia*, who uses sex appeal to drain not only veins but gonads. Yikes! Can



Father Daniel prevail against her? Find out in *Blood Autumn* by Kathryn Ptacek (Tor, \$3.50), a creaky routine fanger with a soft-porn update.

But all is not so drear. Witness these three post-disaster adventures:

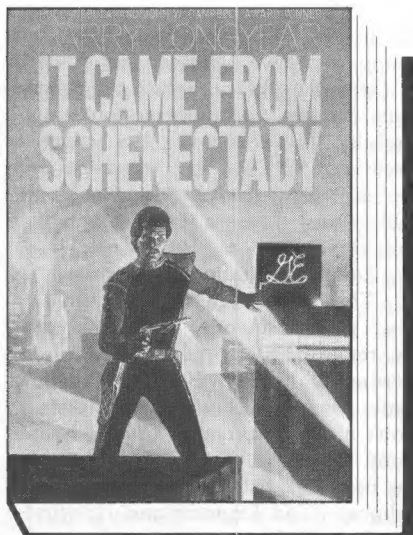
One written somewhat as follows. Shorthand. Book named *Emergence* (Bantam, \$3.95) by likeable new talent David R. Palmer. Disaster is Russian-launched plague-bomb. Wipes out people, leaves buildings, some animals. Eleven-year-old Candy, genius IQ, karate champ, one of few survivors, sets off with pet macaw to find other human beings. First find: horny precocious thirteen-year-old boy. Lots of adventures across USA in vans, motorcycles, planes, even spacecraft. Whee! Would make good kid action movie—too bad Jodie Foster no longer eleven. Only critical quibble: Candy just too brave, strong, resourceful, big-hearted, talented. Also, too much trite old Super Race stuff, not really necessary. But book fun. Prose style catching, too.

Second adventure—the second adventure, that is—is a rip-roarer by Tim Powers, author of the Philip K. Dick Award-winning *The Anubis Gate*. *Dinner at Deviant's Palace* (Ace \$2.95) is set in a future L.A. that's a shambles after The Bomb (the regular-style model). Greg Rivas is a local rock star

who, in the past, was a deprogrammer of "Jaybirds," members of seductive cult surrounding a guru named Norton Jaybush. Rivas wants no more of that life—the Jaybirds can be *dangerous*—but he can't resist going after a sentimentally remembered ex-lady love ... And one thing leads to another. The structure here is quite consciously that of the Orpheus and Euridice legend, and it's faithfully rendered, too. But read it not for the mythical maunderings but for slam-bam adventure, full of wonderful awfulnesses: an inventively hellish Holy city, an exuberantly corrupt L.A. sleaze district where Deviant's Palace lies, and, in Jaybush, a memorable villain—part Jerry Falwell, part Jabba the Hutt. This is a book that works extremely well on its own terms, and it's probably going to get a few prize nominations as well. I'd vote for it on the grounds of structural integrity alone, but others will surely give it points for the good time they had with it.

The third of these books, Michael Swanwick's *In the Drift* (Ace, \$2.95), is much more serious in intent, but much less successful as a novel. In fact, it isn't a novel at all, but a rather loosely tied collection of novellas and stories concerning the efforts of survivors in the Philadelphia and New England areas to deal with the effects of a disastrous nuclear meltdown at Three Mile Island. In the opening novella, a visiting woman journalist from Boston is attacked by the Mummies, the ruling caste of Philadelphia; her discovery that Philly is not "clean" after all, but lies within the drift zone of nuclear fallout, makes her too dangerous to live. Not a bad story, but subsequent tales having to do with vampirism, faith healing, and spiritism, plus the power-broking of the Mummer Mafia, become a bit much. In fact, the further Swanwick gets from the realism of his first story, the weaker he gets. And the lack of an overall storyline doesn't help.





On to japeries: three.

Rudy Rucker is the mathematician chap whose last novel, *Software*, won the previous year's Philip K. Dick Award. *Master of Space and Time* (Bluejay, \$14.95) is being compared in early reviews to the work of Robert Sheckley. Bang on. Rucker does write very much as Sheckley did twenty years ago—he's a spirited wisecracker with gigabursts of intelligence and imagination, and, if you ask me, he sustains a novel better than Sheckley ever did.

Trying to summarize this plot won't get us far. I'll try. Two pals, a computer programmer named Fletch and a creep radio repairman named Harry, are Saturday-afternoon tinkers. In a kind of Möbius time continuum, Harry comes back from the future to remind Fletch to come back from the future to tell him, Harry, how to build the "blunzer" that will make Harry master of space and time, and also to give him the ability to grant wishes via "gluons," the particles that glue quarks together. Harry and Fletch visit the Looking Glass World, where they pick up a dreadful naked-brain parasite named Gary ... Let's see. Fletch gets turned into a gorgeous woman ... But enough! Wish-fulfillment is a perilous business, as many a folktale has warned us. Want to be a beautiful as the dawn? To be rich? To fly? To eliminate world hunger? The blunzer makes it possible. But before you make your wish, read this book. Or read it anyway. It's mostly an agreeable frou-frou, but Rucker is something of a nose-thumbing master of space and time himself.

So Long and Thanks for All the Fish (Crown, \$12.95) is the fourth and possibly the last of Douglas Adams's

*Hitchhiker* series, well known from radio and tv as well as the bestseller list. As you may recall, at the end of the last installment, *Life, the Universe and Everything*, Earth was demolished to make way for a new hyperspace bypass. Or so Ford Prefect, peripatetic freelance writer for *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Universe*, believed. Imagine his surprise to find himself back on that "Mostly harmless" planet again, even though it supposedly no longer exists. What is going on here?

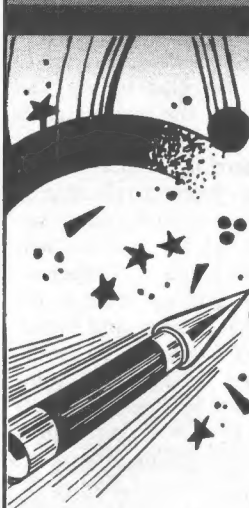
More tomfoolery is what, with Ford, Arthur Dent (still in his bathrobe, but this time also in love), Marvin the boringly mournful robot (in a telling cameo appearance), a rain god named Rob McKenna, a Big Sur sage named Wonko, and so forth. If you liked the others, you'll like this one. Don't attempt it cold. I think Adams is pretty funny, myself, and some day I hope to read something more sustaining from him.

Tom Robbins actually *has* written something more sustaining in *Jitterbug Perfume* (Bantam, \$15.95). Never much of a Robbins fan, I found myself

amused by this new romp through imaginary history. The cast is large and the action starts early—nearly a thousand years ago in proto-Bohemia, when King Alobar flees house and harem to avoid the inevitable consequence of a king's first grey hairs—death. Eventually he takes up with the ripe and lovely Indian beauty, Kudra, and together they learn how to stop the aging process indefinitely. They also pick up a smelly pal, the not-so-Great-anymore God Pan, and, sometime in the seventeenth century, in order to mask his odor, they invent a perfume, K-23.

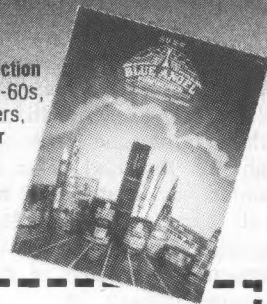
Meanwhile, back in our own time, competitive perfume research is going on in three different venues: in New Orleans, at the shop of Mme. Devalier and her assistant Vlu; in Seattle, in the grubby room of Priscilla, the genius waitress; in Paris (as you might expect), at the family *parfumerie* of the LeFevers. A bottle of K-23, distilled in the seventeenth century, has turned up, and the first person to duplicate its effect will make a fortune. Well, actually, you can't. There were twists

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galore here, many involving the strange properties of *beets*, as well as some good characters, some awful puns (I do mean awful, on the order of late-night barflies leaving sadder Budweiser), and some unfortunate overdoses of whimsy. There's also some fairly awful copy-editing on Bantam's part which I find particularly annoying in view of the fact that this book is going to make a mint for them. But don't let that stop you.

On to short story collections: three.

**Tales by Moonlight** (Tor, \$2.95) is a title that ought to appeal to TZ readers. The collection, edited by Jessica Amanda Salmonson, features the work of mostly brand-new writers, and your correspondent was interested to note that it has already been reviewed, in its own introduction, by none other than Stephen King. "This is a flawed, uneven book," he says, and proceeds to explain, in detail, why he likes nine of the included twenty stories. Of the others he writes: "I thought several of them were most exquisitely awful—I'll not embarrass you, me or the writers of these tales by singling them out." Though, of course, in *not* singling them out, he has managed the *coup d'embarrassment* just the same.

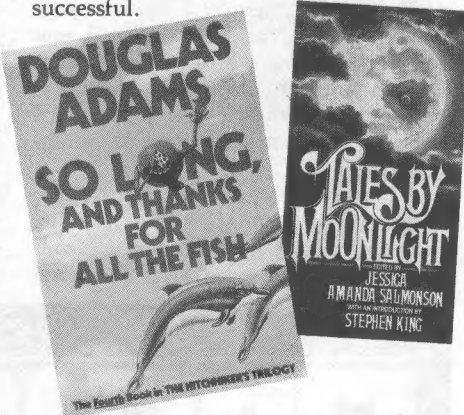
My own opinion follows that of King pretty well. I like a humorous sword-and-sorcery number by Ron Nance less than he did, and I like a strange little Nutcrackeresque fantasy, involving fierce toy soldiers and a magic egg, called "An Egg for Ave," by Richard Lee-Fulgham, considerably more (it makes his pass list, but he doesn't waste any time on it). Also, I rather fancy a werewolfian short-short with a grotesque twist called "The Night of the Red, Red Moon," by Elinor Busby, that doesn't make his list at all. I too will be reticent about the exquisite stinkers, though I can't resist mentioning that two of them are by the same author.

The best story, King and I agree (come to think of it, the editor does too), is "The Inhabitant of the Pond," by Linda Thornton. It's about a small boy involved in devil worship. There's an Arthur Machen quality to it, and it also reminds me of Saki's classic "Sredni Vashtar," though it's nastier and scarier. Do I have your attention?

**It Came from Schenectady** (Bluejay, \$15.95) is the title of Barry Longyear's new collection. I wonder how Roger Zelazny feels at this appropriation of his classic zinger ("Where do

you sci-fi authors get your weird ideas from?" "Schenectady, ma'am."). He gets a nod, but only just, in the introduction.

Longyear is of the traditional BEM-raygun-spacesuit-and-no-frills-prose sf persuasion. A couple of these stories, "The House of If" and "Dreams," attempt to get fancy and fail. Longyear also seems preoccupied by the act of writing itself; several stories and many of the rather forced, jocular individual story introductions deal with the subject. A Hugo nominee here, "The Homecoming," is an old-fashioned yarn of space-faring dinosaurs returning to reclaim their planet. It shows him at this most relaxed and successful.



**Firewatch** (Bluejay, \$14.95) is Connie Willis's first collection. Willis is the newcomer who, in 1982, copped Nebulas for both a novella (the title story here, about St. Paul's Cathedral during the London blitz; it also won a Hugo) and a novelette ("A Letter for the Clearys," a post-disaster tale, also included), and this book is bound to attract attention. I'm glad to say that it's deserved. Not all the stories are as good as the prizewinners, but I thought a couple were terrific. "Sidon in the Mirror" is one of them, a tale that in its general air of corruption and its setting, an alien bordello, recalls Gene Wolfe's "The Fifth Head of Cerberus." To my mind, it's right up there in the same league as that strange and evocative piece. I won't forget "Sidon" soon, nor will I forget "All My Darling Daughters," a story written especially for this volume. It's about corruption, too, this time at a boarding school. It's nasty as hell, and very effective.

Willis has, in fact, a real gift for depravity. This is not so common as you might think. Corruption and depravity, especially the sexual sort, are subjects that fascinate writers, but they don't "do" them well, usually end-

ing up with a banality, silliness, or lumpy, excessive ugliness. Tim Powers, in *Deviant's Palace*, treats them with some humor, and does so quite successfully. But to convey the seductive fascination of evil by inference and carefully controlled writing is difficult; Willis must have a warped mind. I look forward to her first novel.

Last, one continuing event:

The *Dune* saga is remarkable in more ways than one. First, of course, it's remarkably popular. Any disappointment in the 1984 movie (and some die-hard Dunatics do love it) won't affect book sales. **Chapterhouse: Dune** (Putnam's, \$17.95) is sure to hit the bestseller list, as did the last two volumes (*God Emperor* and *Heretics*).

Remarkable, too, how the books have changed. Perhaps that's only natural in a series that's been evolving over a score of years (*Dune* was published in 1965). Unlike his formidable Bene Gesserit Sisterhood, Frank Herbert made no long-term plans for continuing his story for what may well be the rest of his life (the current book ends on a cliff-hanger), and he's had plenty of time to change and evolve his ideas. Who could predict success like this? Together with *Shogun*, the original *Dune* is the premier adventure tale of our time; millions have read it who don't read other fantasy or science fiction, or, indeed, much fiction of any kind.

*Dune* offered heroes and villains, beautiful ladies and fearsome monsters, high moral adventure, exoticism, and plenty to thrill two of the strong factions of the sixties, the druggies and the ecology nuts. It was followed by a murky mystical sequel, *Dune Messiah*, which preached the dire consequence of raising an ayatollah to glory. This lost the casual readers, but the fans persevered through *Children of Dune*, which feature the offspring of the Messiah, né Paul Atreides, and showed the the consequences of hereditary ayatollahism. There's more plot in this one, but it's still heavy on the static handwringing, and is, like its predecessor, full of portentousness and not much fun.

It took Herbert the rest of the sixties and seventies to produce those two books, but, as the go-go eighties approached, he switched into a different fear. In *God Emperor* (1981), the survivor of the Children, who is now turned into a giant worm, is so pontifical that Herbert seems to be poking sly fun at himself and at the two pre-

ceding volumes. And now the Atreides, who certainly have been full of themselves for far too long, are clearly seen as villains, while a whole new set of heroes and conflicts, mostly among women, begin to emerge.

With *Heretics* (1984), Herbert virtually abandoned hortatory obfuscation and got back to basic plot, pitting his Bene Gesserit against a band of upstarts. He also abandoned the planet Dune, blasting it into smithereens, as if to say that he was done with that part of his life. The new book continues the plotting, setting up four different opposing groups.

First, of course, are the Bene Gesserit, a constant throughout the preceding novels, who have now taken a beautiful, fertile planet and are, through weather manipulation, turning it into an arid desert so that the spice-producing worms can live there. The Honored Matres, a heretical sisterhood whose great talent is in enticing ordinary men into sexual slavery, are conquering planets by force. The Tleilaxu, the Face Dancers, who own the tanks that can produce clones of dead men, are swinging into action for a power grab of their own. And a group of Jews (that's right, Jews, and such Jews as haven't been seen lately outside the pages of Isaac B. Singer) have lately turned up. Meanwhile, Sheeana, the talented lassie from the last book, is not only refusing to ally herself with anyone else, but is setting herself up as a new goddess. Uh-oh!

In short, Frank Herbert has deep-sixed Meaning and has pitched headlong into pulp Shenanigans. Those Jews should give a clue, as should the fact that the head Honored Matre is known as the Spider Queen. And, too, Duncan Idaho, heretofore discreet in all his clone guises through earlier books, has discovered sex! In a big way, too. The Honored Matre who was supposed to enslave him sexually has become his sex slave, so that the two of them can't keep their hands off each other through the whole book. This has its humorous moments.

No way is this book, or any of the other sequels, up to the standards of the original *Dune*. But it's fun. One warning, though: if you haven't been following what's been going on with the gang, you're going to be hopelessly lost here. Best to check out *Heretics* for background, and you might even have to dip into *God Emperor*. The web of the Spider Queen is a tangled one, my pretties. 12

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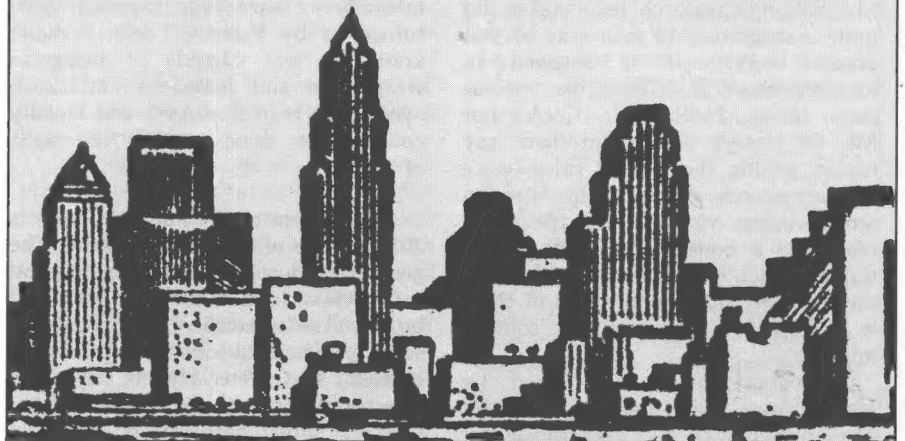
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SCREEN/*Graham Wilson*

# WINTER DOLDRUMS

Christmas brought a tidy little packet of cinematic disappointments, all of them more or less anticipated. One of them was so confidently expected, in fact, that it came more as a confirmation than a surprise; the second was mixed (a little better than expected here, not much worse than expected there, and so not particularly painful); and the third was one of those saddening events which make writing this kind of a column a very difficult chore.

But then nobody said it would be easy. Or did they? I forget.

Let us start with the one least liable to have broken your heart, namely *Supergirl*. Now, there may be some of you out there who expected great things from *Supergirl*; TZ has a rather wishy readership, counting library browsers and borrowers from friends, and there may well be some among you who were looking forward eagerly to this thing. And if that is the case, I am sorry to be the one to tell you that the cute little gnomes at Alex Salkind's magic workshop have let you down again, only this time with a bigger thump than usual. How to break it to you? Where to start?

Well, I suppose with Faye Dunaway, who plays a kind of witch headquartering in the spook-house of an abandoned carnival. Ms. Dunaway, assisted feebly by Peter Cook as a kind of warlock (I more than suspect that Mr. Salkind's research team never did quite manage to find their way to that occult bookstore), is engaged in naughty magic in order to do various mean things. Neither Mr. Cook's nor Ms. Dunaway's agents did them any favors getting them these roles, since the one spends almost all his time on screen being visibly lost, the other maintains a constant pitch of frantic flailing which must have ended by boring even her, and neither one of them is ever funny for a single solitary minute.

*Supergirl* herself is played by Helen Slater, who seems a perfectly okay person with nice eyes and a sort

of earnest, preppy look to her, but she does not in any way come across as super. Since I have nothing in the world against her, it will be fine with me if everybody forgets that this is how she got her start in show biz; but if she ever does play *Supergirl* again (which is highly unlikely), she should have it written in her contract that the special effects people mustn't let the wires show. I can see how she over-looked it the first time, since I, too, just naturally assumed that, in a production this expensive, the people would see to it that the wires wouldn't show ... but they didn't. You just can't trust anyone these days.

There was one moment in *Supergirl* with such a nice human feel that I can't imagine how it got snuck in. When *Supergirl* does her first flying on Earth, she does it in gawky, coltish little hops and kicks, and my sincere congratulations to the persons or person responsible for that charming little sequence.

The rest of the film is entirely tacky and depressing. I guess the two most depressing and tacky things about it are its really bottomless male chauvinism (unlike the *Superman* epics, the basic struggle is not about anything relatively important, such as saving mankind or protecting the planet Earth, but about who gets to bed a beautiful male hunk played with appropriate helplessness by Hart Bochner) and the monumentally depressing performance turned in by Peter O'Toole. I didn't know he was capable of being as wrapped-in and sealed-off and dead-eyed as he is in *Supergirl*, and I really could have done without the sight of it.

Disappointment number two is *2010*, but it's of quite another kind. The general production is really quite good—first-class, in fact; slick as slick could be. Swell sets; excellent special effects; solid, professional jobs turned in by an excellent cast; Peter Hyams taking his directorial post with the utmost seriousness. In short, high polish and good

technical structuring abound. But all this sequel ends up doing with these many wonders is to muck up the memory of *2001*. (Only temporarily, I'm happy to say. I found that *2001*'s spell reasserted itself easily after a few blocks' walk from the theater, Kubrick being a far more powerful magician than anyone concerned with this present effort.)

I confess that my experience with both *2001* and *2010* is entirely cinematic, as I have read neither of Arthur C. Clarke's books. But since his is the continuing creative presence, it's highly possible that the essential collapse of the myth in the second movie, the dissipation of its mystery, may be his fault. The most unfortunate aspect of all this is that *2010* seems to have, as its great desire and chief aim, the urge to explain what *2001* meant—and not merely the relatively minor technical questions, such as why was HAL a naughty computer (a question I now realize I never even asked), but also questions about the mysterious slabs sent to us by the whatsises. The movie shows us more of how they function, and even (a truly fatal move!) has the whatsises speak to us in plain English. All of this struck me as very, very ill-advised. On the plus side, there is the provocative idea that humanity will not be made any less human for its increasing association with high technology—a thesis which Clarke has advanced in many of his novels, articles, and stories. Bob Balaban, for example, gives considerable depth to the part of HAL's creator; in what is probably the best role in the movie, he plays a future Silicon Valley type who, never quite having got the hang of relating to people, had done a brave job of compensating by developing genuinely loving relationships with machines. There is a nice, touching moment between Roy Scheider, as an American astronaut, and Natasha Shneider, as a Russian one, which effectively demonstrates that neither nationalist differences nor super science will ever replace a simple, honest hug. (I'll buy that.) John Lithgow does an amusing and terrifying

spinoff version of the neurotic airline passenger role he played in *Twilight Zone—The Movie*, only this time the poor son of a bitch is in outer space!

But—and it is a monster “but”—every time *2010* stops being its own movie and tries to patch in with *2001*, it comes off second best. None of its “developments” and “explanations” do anything but trivialize the impact of Kubrick’s wild, open-ended mind-bender.

The big disappointment, however—and it really is a beaut—is *Dune*. There were many ominous straws blowing in the wind prior to its opening, dark hints dropped in insidious ways, peculiarly self-protective studio announcements . . . but since I have enormous respect and admiration for its writer and director, David Lynch, I assumed, or hoped, that all these warning signs simply proved that the doubters didn’t understand how good *Dune* was, or that they snobbishly suspected it might be above the heads of the ignorant crowd (you and me) and that we would stay away from its ticket vendors in droves because we were too dense to understand it.

Like yourselves, I was treated to numerous stills showing the extraordinary sets designed by Tony Masters of *2001* fame—our very own dear old TZ was among the many publications displaying them—and mind-boggling they were! Staggeringly vast, going on for blocks in enormous complexity, rococo and detailed, everything about them inventive as hell, photographed strikingly by Freddie Francis, strutted through by actors all gussied up in bizarre but gorgeous costumes designed by Robert Ringwood, and over all the smoky, highly recognizable atmosphere of David Lynch. Whatever else *Dune* might be, it was certain to be a feast for the eyes, a downright sensual parade of images.

And it is that, most certainly. Haunting, rich stuff that wafts easily back into one’s consciousness. The first view of the court of the Emperor Shaddam IV, for example, is truly extraordinary and easily calls to mind the paintings of Velazquez, although a Velazquez darkened with Goya’s palette, and the effect is truly awesome . . . until the actors start talking and the plot starts grinding. And from that point on the whole thing loses its credibility and, so far as your saddened reviewer is concerned, never gets it back.



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And I speak as a master suspender of disbelief, truly I do. I can sit and watch contentedly the most extraordinary fantasies without blinking an eye. I have swallowed without gulping whole universes of monsters and marvels and whatnot. Even if you give me a somewhat faulty fable and tell it haltingly, chances are I’ll be able to enjoy it and, what’s more, go along with your ridiculous premise, get wrapped up in your creatures’ doings, jump with fright at your ogres, be saddened when your heroine cries. But with *Dune*, for all its lovely visual effects, for all its clever touches, its careful thinking-out of what this or that character should wear or eat or use for weapons, I was never able to believe in any of it, nor was I ever able to care the tiniest little bit what happened to anybody in it. They’re not people—they’re window dummies.

The truth of it is, *Dune* may be one of the most uninvolved movies I have ever seen.

Maybe the thing was just overplanned, conceived at too long a distance. There’s no sense of immediacy anywhere in it. It feels built at arm’s length. In spite of lots of blood and bashing and running pus, there’s no physicality in it; indeed, there’s almost a kind of narcotic numbness to it, like getting prepped for a surgical operation.

This is particularly unfortunate for

“A nice guy from outer space.” Jeff Bridges as an E.T. in human form, and Karen Allen as his unwilling date, in *Sfarman*.

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# SCREEN

a movie which, like *Star Wars*, is essentially concerned with high emotions: strong personal involvements, bold heroic strivings, passionate dedication to ideal and the like. It's about the confrontations and clashings of vast armies led by gaudy leaders, about horrendous villains on the grand scale, about huge dreams of empire aligned with cosmic salvation.

Of course, with someone as brilliant as Lynch running the show, there are bound to be extraordinary things in *Dune*. His feel for eccentricity is indulged to fine effect, and all sorts of marvelous grotesque types and bizarre doings abound. He has lots of fun with the superbly degenerate Harkonnens, those evil oil magnates of the future, and in particular with the Baron Vladimir Harkonnen, played by that fat expert villain Kenneth McMillan, all decked out with running boils and a floating suit as he indulges himself in offbeat homicidal jokes. The gadgetry in *Dune* may be electronic, but it is fundamentally Early Industrial Revolution, Victorian and brutal, clanging and crashing, farting out blasts of unpleasant steam and emitting blinding flashes. There is, of course, pollution everywhere; even the best palaces can't seem to get their air conditioning properly adjusted. Torture devices about in the technologies of all of *Dune's* cultures, and nothing looks comfortable; the chairs and even the thrones look like they'd give you a bad back.

The heroes are not as well realized as the villains. The good guys—the House Atreides—resemble a brave little group of preppy Hapsburgians, or maybe Romanovs. They're always remote, because unlike with the Harkonnens, where he is careful to consistently rub our faces into their sweaty, diseased flesh, Lynch insists that we view the good guys from such an admiring distance—even in close-ups (not a bad trick!)—that I, for one, never felt I was really worthy to be even a personal friend. (I mean, I *know* none of those snooty bastards would ever recognize me if they passed me on the street.) The result was that I really couldn't get all steamed up about the importance of their being kings and queens and such, to be perfectly honest. It is unfortunate, too, that the movie's hero, young Paul Atreides, is played earnestly but really not very well by Kyle MacLachlan. When he launches into his Errol-Flynn-as-Robin-Hood calls to God and Country, it is with noticeable lack of effect.

What moves me from sorrowful regret to simple annoyance is the fact that so many of the errors can be laid to a simple lack of observation. I won't go on and on about, but there is one whoppingly important home truth which should have been incorporated into the movie's special effects. It concerns the animation of the worm.

I don't know if you are unaware of it—it is highly unlikely that you're not—but a major factor in the *Dune* books is a race of enormous sandworms. There is no way you can get around these worms if you're doing a movie on the subject. The makers of *Dune* feature the worms prominently in the film, as well they should; what with one thing and another, you end up seeing a good deal of them.

Now if you take a worm, an actual worm, and hold it in the palm of your hand (or, if you are squeamish, examine it more sanitarily), the most visible and inescapable thing about its motion—the thing that makes it distinct from snakes or eels or anything else along long lines—is that it moves by expanding and contracting, something like bowels. (Worms really *are* bowels, more or less, when you get right down to it.) Their many segments constantly squeeze and swell like the sections of an accordion.

This is an unavoidable down-home truth which any barefoot boy with cheek of tan could tell you. Which makes it stupid past belief that Dino De Laurentis spent in excess of forty-five million bucks on an epic about mammoth worms which move so badly they look like giant salamis being pushed through the sand. Even more annoying, this bowellike puffing and shrinking of flesh is exactly the kind of horridly gorpy effect that David Lynch is particularly renowned for; it's precisely the sort of thing he may have been hired for.

Kind of wavering in the middle of the scale of those films that worked and those that didn't is John Carpenter's *Starman*. It certainly represents a big departure for him: it is essentially gentle, even loving, and, cosmically at least, quite upbeat in mood and philosophy.

Locally, however, it is not upbeat at all, for it views our Earthling society with unwavering stern disapproval. With the exception of a couple of women—Karen Allen as the wistful heroine and Lu Leonard as a roadhouse waitress—our species is represented as

being a mean lot of bastards with few saving graces, and one can only hope that if a real live Starman ever does arrive on our little mudball, he will view us with a more forgiving eye than Carpenter's.

Not that the Starman, played by Jeff Bridges, is unkindly disposed toward us. Indeed, when he notices us (he must make an appointment with another starship or die, and throughout the film he has the constantly preoccupied air of someone late for a train and trying to be polite) he seems to find us rather cute in a tricky sort of way. And though he makes it clear that his society is vastly superior to ours in that irritating way aliens have, he confesses to a growing fondness for such primitive perks such as sweets and sex. Indeed, he is so taken with the personality and so on of Karen Allen that before you know it, he and she find themselves involved. It's handled quite cutely, this intergalactic love affair.

But while Bridges does a very conscientious job of being a Something from outer space doing the best he can while tricked up in an earthling body, and though he does an extremely appealing freakish walk, he is just not up to, say, Michael Rennie in *The Day the Earth Stood Still* for smarts. He is clearly a nice guy from outer space, quite lovable and all, but you do not get the idea that he is an Einstein next to your aardvark. I don't think that it's Bridges's fault; I think it's the script and Carpenter's.

Another problem is the reaction of our society to the idea that there's a Starman in our midst, which is to instantly spin into a totally out-of-control extraterrestrial (if that's the correct spelling) fit. This simply doesn't work in a movie of this kind. It's one thing for the silly, brutish General Brasstars to rush out the militia, et cetera, when a circus attraction such as Godzilla or Mothra or some such comes into view; indeed, one would look askance at any who didn't. But if you're supposed to be showing the folks a thoughtful movie which asks serious questions heavily laced with high morality, you defeat the entire mood by having the forces of law and order instantly throw sweet reason out the window and unleash the Keystone Kops in Kopters. That's not the right mood at all. There should be at least a show of intelligent discussion on the part of the powers that be, even if you're faking it. 17

VIEWPOINT/ *Stanley Schmidt*

# BROCCOLI, ORANGES, AND SCIENCE FICTION

Which is the best food: broccoli, oranges, or chicken?

Chances are that the answer will depend on whom you ask, and quite possibly also on what he or she has a taste for at the time. I personally know individuals who would enthusiastically name each of those items as a personal favorite, and others who would turn up their noses at each of them.

Who is right? And what does any of this have to do with science fiction?

In the previous issue of *Twilight Zone*, there appeared an Etc. item entitled "Great Moments in Literature, or Why We've Stopped Reading Science Fiction." The item thus identified was brief excerpt from Timothy Zahn's Hugo-winning novella "Cascade Point," and the implication was pretty clear that the editorial We behind this item didn't believe "Cascade Point" deserved its award, for reasons which this excerpt was supposed to make obvious.

As the editor who bought and published that story in *Analog Science Fiction/Science Fact*, I was more than slightly pleased to see it win; and Ted Klein, gentleman that he is, has offered me this space to tell you my point of view.

Far be it from me to tell any fellow being he is not entitled to his own opinion of any story, or even to question his right to stop reading an entire field of literature. But I do think that if you do that on the basis of one specimen you don't like, you just might deprive yourself of a lot of future enjoyment. For that reason—and because I would be delighted to have you read *Analog* as well as *Twilight Zone*—I would like to say a few words about

science fiction in general and "Cascade Point" in particular.

And since "Cascade Point" did win the Hugo—and since Somebody evidently wishes it hadn't—I might also raise the slightly heretical question: What do awards like the Hugo really mean, anyway?

It seems to me that giving an award for "Best Story" is quite a bit like giving an award for "Best Food." If you do it by vote, what you really pick is the most popular candidate. If you accept that as an objective definition of "Best," fine; that's your privilege. But bear in mind that if you let everybody vote, Big Mac may well win the "Best Food" award, to the horror of gourmet columnists everywhere, while a liver recipe that sends you or me into rapture would have no chance in a popularity contest. Does this mean that somebody who doesn't like hamburgers or does like liver is "wrong"? I think not. I think it means only that terms like "right," "wrong," "good," and "bad" are inappropriate in matters of taste. The only thing that matters in evaluating a food is how *you* like it. You could, of course, use a completely different, more objective criterion such as nutritional content to define "good"—but the average person who has to eat the winner is unlikely to be impressed, unless he also finds it tastes good.

You could go through a whole series of parallel arguments concerning writing or any other art form. There are individuals who get paid for saying in print which books or movies they think are "best"—and if you read very many of them, you'll quickly discover that their judgments are often so wildly

different that it's hard to believe they're talking about the same work. How do you decide which critic is "right"? You don't. Instead, you recognize that reactions to literature or art, no matter how much they may be rationalized by "objective analysis," are ultimately subjective reactions—and, as Kipling might have said, "every single one of them is right." An award like the Hugo or the Nebula or the Oscar is simply an expression of a consensus—often a rather slim one—of a number of individual (and frequently self-appointed) critics. If enough of these critics like something enough to give it an award, chances are good that many other people will like it, too. But it would be astonishing if everybody did.

"Cascade Point," obviously, didn't do the trick for Somebody. I'm not really surprised; I've never seen a story that did it for everyone. "Cascade Point" is, in fact, a rather special kind of story, though by no means as narrowly specialized as the snippet in *Twilight Zone* made it appear. I could hardly deny that that excerpt is densely packed with abstruse technical jargon, incomprehensible out of context, which a casual observer might (wrongly) suspect of being made up just to give an exaggerated pseudoscientific flavor to the story. What the excerpt does not begin to show is that all of that "incomprehensible jargon" makes perfectly good sense if you read it where it belongs, as an integral part of the story. It is, in fact, the climax of what I and several hundred Hugo voters consider one of the most ingeniously worked-out scientific problem stories we've seen in a long time, cleverly



## "Perhaps the award should be not 'Best Short Story of 1985' but 'The Favorite Short Story of the 912 People Who Bothered to Vote.'"

interweaving some highly original speculations in both physics and psychology to generate what many of us found to be a thoroughly engrossing yarn.

Stories in which scientific problems play a central role don't appeal to everyone, of course; but then, they're only one kind of science fiction. You'll find quite a range of different kinds of stories in *Analog* or any other good sf magazine, and I wouldn't want an exclusive diet of any one kind.

I've met people who don't read *Analog* regularly but have somehow picked up the idea that scientific problem stories are all we publish; that simply isn't true. That fact of the matter is that that type of story has become something of a "lost art," and apparently many readers agree with me that when one comes along as well done as "Cascade Point," it deserves special recognition. We can only sympathize with those who disagree, and wish their candidates better luck next time. (As one who has been nominated for a Hugo five times and has yet to win one, I can certainly sympathize with such a position!)

Maybe the best way to avoid being too annoyed when a story you don't care for wins a Hugo or a Nebula is to remind yourself as accurately as possible just what such an award really means. The official wording in both cases says something like "Best Short Story of 1985," but you need only look at the frequent disagreements between Hugo and Nebula lists for the same year to realize that neither award really means that in an objective sense that everyone can agree on. A Hugo or Nebula winner is simply that story which wound up with the largest number of votes, counted according to specified rules, among a rather small number of individuals—never more than a fraction of a percent of all readers—expressing preferences based on highly individual tastes.\* Those voters are not even a random sample—they are, by definition, people who care enough about a particular award to want to vote for it. Perhaps, then, the most accurate subtitle on any such award would be not "Best Short Story

of 1985," but "The Favorite Short Story of the 912 People Who Bothered to Vote."

Of course, if awards *were* described in such terms, interest in them would decline until in fact, we might see the last of them. Personally, I would feel no real sense of loss; I don't think about awards much except when I or my magazine wins one. When I write or edit, all I'm trying to do is to produce the best story or magazine I can, for as many of my readers as possible. I can't attribute too much importance to the opinions of that small subset of readers who vote for awards.

On the other hand, I certainly wouldn't object to winning one, and I'm always very pleased when one of my authors does. I don't think awards do any real harm, as long as nobody takes them too seriously; and not infrequently they do give some well-

deserved and much-appreciated recognition. A Hugo or Nebula may indeed represent only the personal opinion of a few hundred individuals, and not an objective measure of "Absolute Best" or even the opinion of *all* readers. But impressing even a plurality of those few hundreds is no small accomplishment. The writer or editor who succeeds in doing so, regardless of what particular virtues his work has or lacks, has earned a goodly measure of legitimate pride.

Of course he might do well to remind himself, after the first well-earned rush of triumph, that not *everybody* was that impressed with his work, and that the award might just as well have gone to any of several others. That fact in no way diminishes his achievement, but it may help both him and the others to keep things in perspective.



\*In 1980, for example, only 214 people cast votes for the Nebulas, and not all of them voted in each category. Last year a total of 1,467 Hugo ballots were cast, with 1,082 votes in the novella category.

# ETC.

TZ PROFILE:

## JOHN HURT: MAN OF THE YEAR

*The best film of 1985 may well turn out to be 1984,  
—thanks to this actor's anguished Orwellian presence.*

James Verniere reports:

British actor John Hurt, who's played everything from Caligula in *I, Claudius* to the horribly disfigured title role in *The Elephant Man*, is a little bit sick of playing characters who come to bad ends. But not so sick that he would pass up the opportunity to play Winston Smith, the oppressed, rebellious, and finally defeated clerk in Michael Radford's film adaptation of George Orwell's 1984. And the result is another brilliant, tortured performance from the actor who first garnered international acclaim as the star of *The Naked Civil Servant*, the controversial tv-film adaptation of the autobiography of flamboyant homosexual Quentin Crisp.

But Hurt had established his acting credentials long before playing Crisp. Born in Derbyshire, England, in 1940, the son of an Anglican vicar, he studied at St. Martin's School of Art before winning a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts. A year later, theater critics named him Most Promising Newcomer for his performance in Harold Pinter's *The Dwarfs*, a promise he fulfilled in his international screen debut as the scene-stealing Richard Rich in Fred Zinnemann's *A Man For All Seasons*. Hurt's film career also includes roles in *Ten Rillington Place*, *Midnight Express*, *The Pied Piper*, *Heaven's Gate*, and *The Osterman Weekend*. But, ironically, Hurt is probably best known to the masses as the space traveler with the bursting chest in Ridley Scott's *Alien*.

**TZ:** What is the history of Radford's film version of 1984?

**Hurt:** Well, it was only first conceived of in October of 1983. Sitting in a wine bar, the director and the producer, Simon Perry, came up with the idea of making a new film version of the novel, but they were certain someone else had already come up with the idea. But no one had, so they looked into it a bit further and found that the rights to the property were owned by a



Chicago lawyer who had acquired them from Orwell's widow nine days before her death. They wrote to him and sent him a videotape of their previous film, *Another Time, Another Place*, and he agreed to let them make the film if they could raise the money and come up with a good script.

**TZ:** No doubt everyone kept one eye calendar, since it was by then almost 1984.

**Hurt:** Absolutely. Radford whizzed off to Paris to write the script, and the producer went off to raise the money. We began shooting by March.

**TZ:** What is your reaction to those who say a 1984 film in 1985 is anticlimactic?

**Hurt:** I think that it doesn't really matter whether or not the film is set in the future. It's about an alternate reality.

**TZ:** Would it be possible to say the future is now retroactive?

**Hurt (laughs):** Yes, I suppose it's the first historical futurist film ever made.

**TZ:** Why make a film version of 1984? Isn't the novel enough?

**Hurt:** I think Radford wanted to

remind people of Orwell's message by placing that message in another medium. I think he hoped the film would have the same impact that the novel had when it was first published. What pleases me is that he has created a film people want to see which is totally devoid of romanticism and escapism.

**TZ:** Is the film too grim for today's audiences?

**Hurt:** Certainly there will be some who will say, "The world was never like this and never will be and I'd rather get on with my shopping." But that is kind of inevitable. It does seem to me that the moguls who are in charge of the film business in the States feel that movies should be like processed food, predigested for the American public. But I don't agree. I think the American public is perfectly capable of digesting its own food, given the chance. It's ludicrous to think that because people like *Raiders of the Lost Ark* they won't like anything else.

**TZ:** Some have suggested that your Winston Smith seems much like the real George Orwell, at least in



appearance.

**Hurt:** Well, you can't avoid looking like George Orwell if you're rather thin in the face and have the same haircut. But in this particular case I just assumed that Winston Smith looked rather like me. I read the book in 1956 when I was sixteen and it had a tremendous effect on me, and I suppose one of the wonderful things about the novel is that anyone who reads it imagines himself as Winston Smith.

**TZ:** Were you familiar with Michael Anderson's 1956 film version, which starred Edmund O'Brien and Michael Redgrave?

**Hurt:** Yes, after I read the book I rushed to see the film, but I was very upset by it. It was not the book I'd read.

**TZ:** Was Richard Burton at all concerned about playing the part once played by Redgrave?

**Hurt:** No, he brought a whole new view to it. His O'Brien is perhaps more frightening because he is not evil.

**TZ:** Was there any indication that Burton was ill during shooting?

**Hurt:** No, he was somewhat debilitated by an operation he had had, but he had recovered. In fact, I spoke to him in Switzerland, where I was making a movie, a couple of days before his death, and he seemed quite well.

**TZ:** Did you have any reservations about playing Smith?

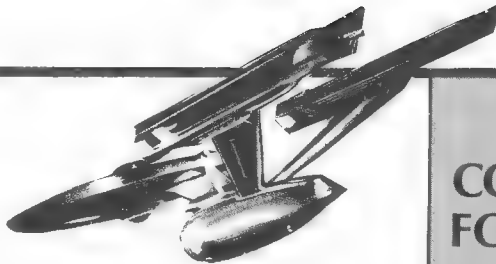
**Hurt:** God, no! The funny thing is that it's easier to remake a classic than it is to work with great material that was once made into a bad film. It's not quite doublethink, just stupidthink.

**TZ:** The credits indicate that the face of Big Brother was supplied by someone named Bob Flag. Who is Bob Flag?

**Hurt (laughs):** Bob Flag is a stand-up comic who is about five-feet-four-inches tall.

**TZ:** You've played some very flamboyant and/or tormented types.

**Hurt:** Yes, someone recently asked me when I was going to play someone normal. But drama gives the audience the privilege of seeing something it normally doesn't see. So in a sense, even ordinary people must become extraordinary, if drama is to work. What is Winston Smith except a normal man? But he is normal in a very special sense—and that's what makes his story a true drama.



## TREKKIE ALERT!

We hate to be alarmist, and don't mean to be spreading false rumors, but we can't resist passing along a press release that came in last week's mail, unsigned, with no return address:

### THE ENTERPRISE WASN'T ENOUGH!

If STAR TREK IV is scripted according to the present story line, her crew is next! EVERYONE, with the possible exception of SPOCK (a cruel joke at best), is scheduled to die in the upcoming film.

THIS MEANS KIRK, BONES, SCOTTY, CHEKOV, SULU, and UHURA!

A younger crew for new adventures is behind this sadistic turn of events.

Please let the powers that be know this is totally unacceptable.

### WRITE LETTERS!

[Here the writer lists the addresses of several Paramount executives.]

For best results please word your letters in a constructive and intelligent fashion. Then pass the alert to your membership, to other fan clubs, and to anyone willing to invest the price of a stamp.

STAR TREK has provided a hopeful promise of things to come; if you've ever been touched by the magic PLEASE HELP!

May you all LIVE LONG AND PROSPER.

## "BECAUSE I COULD NOT STOP FOR DEATH" DEPT.

"An Italian woman says Emily Dickinson, dead for nearly a century, is dictating poetry to her. The poems that result from this unique collaboration have won more than fifty literary awards."

—Fate Magazine



Pictorial Parade

## VANESSA WILLIAMS: CAUGHT IN THE TWILIGHT ZONE

"The appearance of the photos, depicting Ms. Williams in the nude, by herself and with another female model, set off a media brouhaha. Not only was the event a surefire headline generator, but it was happening during the summer doldrums, in a newsless twilight zone between the Democratic and Republican national conventions."

—Advertising Age

## LET'S HEAR IT FOR 'DUNE'

"Those critics (admittedly not many) who managed to make *Dune* sound like a marvelous goof must have got high on 'mélange,' the psychedelic spice that everyone in the movie is fighting over. As for me, I was so bored and confused that by the time beautiful Sean Young showed up, bald, and said, 'I am Chani, daughter of Leit,' I was reduced to answering, 'I am Dave, son of Ida.' A picture in which Sean Young appears with a tube up her nose half the time does not inspire much affection."

—David Denby in *New York Magazine*



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TZ PROFILE:

# CHARLES MARTIN SMITH: LIGHTING UP STARMAN

*The easygoing actor specializes in characters as American as—well, as American Grafitti.*

Lorenzo Carcaterra reports:

In *American Grafitti* he nearly drove an out-of-control Vespa through a storefront window. In *The Buddy Holly Story* he was a member of that tragic singer's band. In *More American Grafitti* he went from nerd to Nam, becoming the unlikely of heroes. And in *Never Cry Wolf* he was a naive biologist struggling for survival in the frozen Arctic wastes. Now, in John Carpenter's *Starman*, Charles Martin Smith adds another character to his repertoire—but, like so many that he's played, a distinctly American one.

There are very few young character actors who project this Americanness quite as convincingly as Charles Martin Smith: short, a bit overweight, balding, friendly, not particularly handsome, willing to help. His face is round and has yet to lose its youthfulness, no matter how many cigars he smokes. The eyes are calm, sincere, a nondescript brown which blends easily into whatever surroundings he happens to be in. He is as American as a Big Mac, through he himself stays away from red meat.

The Los Angeles-born Smith doesn't merely act in front of a camera; he writes songs and scripts (much of the narration of *Never Cry Wolf* came out of his typewriter) and is the director of the Shakespeare in the Park Summer Festival in Vancouver, British Columbia. That's as un-American as he gets.

**TZ:** How do you feel about the comparisons that are made between *E.T.* and *Starman*?

**Smith:** I knew they would be made—that people would think we were ripping off *E.T.*, stuff like that. In truth, Michael Douglas has had this project in development for four years. It just so happened that *E.T.* was made before ours was. People still don't believe you, even when you tell them that. There's nothing much we can do about it.

**TZ:** What can you tell me about Shermin, your character in *Starman*?

**Smith:** He's different than anyone I've played before. A lot more defiant. Usually a director will have to ask me to bring it up a bit. In this case, John Carpenter had to ask me to tone it down. Shermin's a guy who loves his job, but doesn't necessarily like the rules he has to follow in order to do that job.

**TZ:** Why have him smoke cigars?

**Smith:** That was my idea. I've always thought that people who smoke cigars just don't care, they just don't give a damn about anything. That's the attitude I wanted Shermin to have.

**TZ:** What was your favorite moment in the film?

**Smith:** Crawling inside the spaceship. It was exciting, intense, and the dream of the guy I played. It was playing for the Dodgers, winning a gold medal and an Oscar all rolled into one for someone like Shermin. I was really pumped up the day we shot that scene.

**TZ:** Your last two films, *Never Cry Wolf* and *Starman*, have been as different as any of your previous work. Was that deliberate?

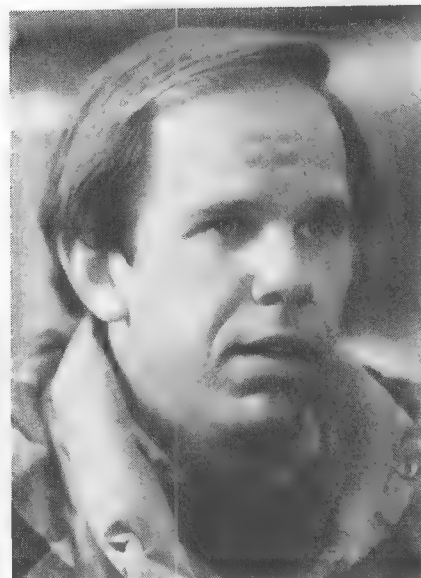
**Smith:** Yes. I also try to do different things in each film, but I'm always offered teenager roles, partly because of the success of *American Grafitti*. Well, that's all well and good, but I just can't play teenagers anymore. I'm getting too damned old.

**TZ:** Is it difficult to break out of the mold that certain producers may place you in?

**Smith:** It's beyond me, way beyond me, to even begin to figure out how producers think and function. I don't know. They do like to slot people in specific categories. I still don't know if that's done out of convenience or because they don't know any better.

**TZ:** How did you get involved in the Shakespeare in the Park program in British Columbia?

**Smith:** It was an accident. While I was working on *Never Cry Wolf*, I found a place in Vancouver that I



liked, and my wife and I spend half the year there and the other half in Los Angeles. While I was waiting for *Starman* to get going, I got involved in some of the local productions. Next thing I know, I'm the 1985 season program director.

**TZ:** Are you worried?

**Smith:** Nah. They have a lot of good actors up there, so staging the works shouldn't be much of a problem. And frankly, I love the idea of being in charge. There's a Napoleonic streak in all of us, especially in us shorter guys.

**TZ:** Can you compare John Carpenter to other directors you've worked with?

**Smith:** I was worried about working with John before I met him. He's a rare breed in Hollywood—a nice, decent, normal, and well-respected man who just loves making horror movies. He's very talented and gives everyone a wide berth in which to work. Also, I've never laughed so much on a movie set in all my life. The guy is incredibly loose. People who know what they're doing usually are.

**TZ:** Are you happy with your film career up to this point?

**Smith:** I guess so. I started at seventeen with a role in *The Culpepper Cattle Company*, and I figure it's gone pretty smoothly from there. Did you see that film?

**TZ:** Yes.

**Smith:** Well, now I know two people who have.

**TZ:** So, you won't give it all up and become the permanent director of Vancouver's Shakespeare Festival?

**Smith:** I think it's safe to say no to that. At least until Olivier retires. 17



# FANTASY FILM REFRESHER COURSE

Here's a teaser covering the entire history of cinematic fantasy, from a turn-of-the-century French silent (based on Jules Verne) to a modern-day Hollywood extravaganza (with more than a touch of H.G. Wells). Any reader able to identify all thirty films has been spending too much time indoors.

Answers on page 71.

1. French film produced and directed by cinema pioneer Georges Méliès. Inspired by Jules Verne's *From the Earth to the Moon* and H.G. Wells's *First Men in the Moon*, it is widely recognized as the first science fiction film. (1902)
2. Horror movie based on "The Tell-Tale Heart" and other works by Edgar Allan Poe. Directed by D.W. Griffith. (1914)
3. An evil hypnotist and his murderous somnambulist are featured in this Expressionistic German film that won world-wide acclaim. (1920)
4. Unauthorized German film version of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. Starring Max Schreck as the vampire. (1922)
5. Arabian Nights fantasy starring Douglas Fairbanks. Directed by Raoul Walsh. (1924)
6. A dinosaur terrorizes London in this precursor to *King Kong*. Special effects by Willis H. O'Brien. (1925)
7. Lon Chaney has a dual role as a vampire and a policeman. Directed by Tod Browning. (1927)
8. Directed by Fritz Lang, this German film has the shortest title in cinema history. Peter Lorre's portrayal of a child-murderer brought him international fame. (1931)
9. Bela Lugosi is a Haitian sorcerer served by an army of the walking dead. (1932)
10. A young couple is menaced by a Satanist in the first of several films to costar Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi. Directed by Edgar G. Ulmer. (1934)
11. A mentalist is put on trial for causing a disaster he predicted. Starring Claude Rains and Fay Wray. (1935)
12. Explorers discover a lost race ruled by an immortal queen. Starring Helen Gahagan, Randolph Scott, and Nigel Bruce. (1935)
13. Cavemen cope with dinosaurs, beastmen, competing tribes, volcanic eruptions, and other everyday problems. Starring Victor Mature, Carole Landis, and Lon Chaney, Jr. (1940)
14. A boy raised by wolves can converse with animals. Produced by Alexander Korda. (1942)
15. A young girl befriends the ghost of her father's first wife. Starring Simone Simon, Kent Smith, and Jane Randolph. (1944)
16. Film based on W.F. Harvey's tale of a severed hand that seeks revenge. Directed by Robert Florey. Starring Robert Alda and Peter Lorre. (1947)
17. First of many monster movies to feature a dinosaur awakened by atomic testing. Inspired by a Ray Bradbury story. Special effects by Ray Harryhausen. (1953)
18. Giant ants infest the Los Angeles sewer system in this film that inspired a cycle of "big bug" movies. Starring James Whitmore, Edmund Gwenn, and James Arness. (1954)
19. Two women carry out what seems to be a successful murder—until the victim reappears. French film directed by Henri-Georges Clouzot. (1955)
20. A pair of scientists are kidnapped by a flying saucer and transported to the dying planet Metaluna. Starring Jeff Morrow, Faith Domergue, and Rex Reason. (1955)
21. An experiment in human teleportation has disastrous results. Screenplay by James Clavell from the story by George Langelaan. (1958)
22. Greek warriors set sail in quest of the Golden Fleece. Special effects by Ray Harryhausen. (1963)
23. Psychological researchers investigate a haunted house. Based on a novel by Shirley Jackson. Directed by Robert Wise. (1963)
24. War has been eliminated, but citizens have an outlet for aggression in the Big Hunt, a game of legalized murder. Italian film starring Marcello Mastroianni, Ursula Andress, and Elsa Martinelli. (1955)
25. Firemen of the future battle literacy by burning books in this adaptation of Ray Bradbury's novel. Directed by François Truffaut. Starring Oskar Werner and Julie Christie. (1966)
26. An ancient Martian spacecraft is discovered beneath the streets of London. Screenplay by Nigel Kneale. (1967)
27. Four horror stories by Robert Bloch from the pages of *Weird Tales*. Directed by Roy Ward Baker. (1972)
28. On St. Valentine's day, 1900, a schoolteacher and three young girls go for a walk and inexplicably disappear. Australian film adapted from the novel by Joan Lindsay. Directed by Peter Weir. (1975)
29. A teenage girl with telekinetic powers is elected prom queen. Directed by Brian DePalma. (1976)
30. H.G. Wells pursues Jack the Ripper. Directed by Nicholas Meyer. Starring Malcolm McDowell, Mary Steenburgen, and David Warner. (1979)





# Flying to BYZANTIUM

*Flushed with newfound fame, a princess  
in the golden world of fantasy,  
she returned to the world of her past—  
and to a strangely private horror.*

by LISA TUTTLE

**T**he steady noise and pressurized atmosphere inside the airplane made everything seem slightly unreal. Was she really going back to Texas?

She thought of flat coastal plains, mosquitos whining in the humid night air, dirty white plumes of smoke rising from industrial stacks, her mother's house and the dreary brightness of the Woolco, and a familiar misery possessed her.

No. Her hands clenched in her lap. She was going back to Texas, but not to the stagnant little town on the Gulf Coast where she had grown up; she was flying to Byzantium.

The name of the town made her smile: how the dreams of the pioneers became the lies of property developers! She didn't know Byzantium. She had never heard of it before the invitation to spend the weekend as a guest of honor at a science fiction convention held there. According to the map, Byzantium was more than five hundred miles west of the southeastern swamp where she had grown up. West Texas to her meant deserts and dust, cowboys and rattlesnakes, rugged mountains etched against postcard sunsets: it was the empty space between Houston and Los Angeles, traversed by air.

She lived in Hollywood now, and Texas was no longer home. She was Sheila Stoller, author of *Moonlight Under the Mountain*, and her fans were paying for the privilege of meeting her.

Sheila pulled her traveling case from beneath the seat and took out her notebook, thinking of Derek. He had been impressed by her invitation to Byzantium, more than she was herself. But then he was an actor. Public appearances were something he understood, a sign of success. It had never occurred to him that Sheila might not accept—perhaps that was why she had. Away from him, though, she felt her confidence flag. She knew nothing about science fiction. Wouldn't the others at the convention see her as a fraud? She had written a speech in her notebook, the story of how she had written

*Moonlight Under the Mountain*, but the speech was a fraud, too, a carefully constructed fiction. She stared down at the page, wondering if she would have the nerve to read it.

The notebook had been a gift from Derek. "For your next novel," he had said, giving it to her with his famous, flashing smile. And she had taken it, unable to tell him that there would not be a next novel.

Ordinary people had ordinary jobs in Hollywood, as they did everywhere else, as sales clerks, as waiters, as secretaries and janitors, but in Hollywood the jobs were always temporary; the people in them were *really* actors, directors, dancers, singers, producers, writers waiting for the main chance. Derek had been an actor working as a waiter until his pilot took off: now he had a minor but regular role in a weekly comedy series. He was the wise-cracking roommate's best friend. Viewing figures and audience response were both good, and he was on his way up.

He thought that Sheila was on her way up, too. It was true she made her living doing temporary secretarial work, but she'd had one novel published, and surely it was only a matter of time until she was well-paid and famous: all she had to do was to keep on writing.

But Sheila didn't write anymore. She no longer felt the need.

Writing, for Sheila, had always been a means of escape. It took her out of herself, away from loneliness, dull high school classes, and the tedium of working behind a counter at the local Woolco. When she was writing she could forget that she wasn't pretty, didn't have a boyfriend or an interesting job, and had no talents and no future. She'd had no friends because she never tried to cultivate any. Girls her own age thought she was a weird, stuck-up bookworm—she thought they were boring, and didn't bother to hide her opinions. Her quirky intelligence made her reject most of the peo-

# Flying to Byzantium

ple and things around her, but did not make her special enough to be forgiven. Despite her reading, she was an indifferent student, lazy in the classroom and inept at sports. She tried to write for the school magazine and newspaper, but after several cool rejections she learned to keep her writing to herself.

She wrote another world into existence. It was a fairy-tale world full of monsters and treasures, simpler, starker, and more beautiful than the reality she felt suffocating her, and she escaped into it whenever she could. Her universe contained a vast and dangerous wasteland spotted with small, isolated villages. One of the settlements had a mountain rising from its center, towering over everything, dominating the landscape and the lives of those who lived there. For beneath the mountain was a series of mazelike tunnels where dwelt the evil, powerful gnomes. They kept the townspeople in terror until a young girl, Kayli, won her way through a series of adventures, battles and enchantments to triumph over the gnomes and steal their sacred treasure for herself.

Sheila shared her world with no one, and never thought of publication, except as a vague fantasy. It was her mother who brought it about, indirectly. Sheila knew she was a disappointment to her mother—she almost took pleasure in it. Something in her seemed to compel contradiction, and as long as her mother nagged her about her appearance Sheila would eat too much, forget to wash her hair, and dress in unattractive, poorly-fitting clothes. Her mother thought scribbling in notebooks was a waste of time, and it was her disparaging comment on a "writers' weekend" being held at a local college which made Sheila consider attending. And it was there that Sheila met the editor who ultimately published *Moonlight Under the Mountain*.

She didn't make a lot of money from the book—the reality wasn't like her fantasy—but it gave her enough to leave Texas, to fly to Los Angeles and buy a used car and find her own apartment before she had to look for work. On the West Coast, in the sunshine, far from her mother's nagging, Sheila blossomed. She took an interest in the way she looked, bought fashionable clothes, joined a health spa, had her hair permed and exchanged her heavy, smudged glasses for a pair of tinted contact lenses.

Derek met her while she was temping in his agent's office. He admired her clear, emerald eyes, her smooth, tanned skin and slim figure, but those things were the norm in California—it was her book which caught his attention. He admired writers, and liked the idea of dating one so much that Sheila didn't know how to tell him the truth. She had written a book, but that didn't make her a writer in the way that he was an actor. Writing was one of the things—like baby fat, acne, and bad manners—she had left behind her in Texas.

**T**hey were like ghosts of her past, standing there waiting for her in the Campbell County Airport. Sheila knew them at once, without any doubt, and knew she had been wrong to come. "Sheila Stoller?"

They knew her, too, and that was another bad sign, like calling to like. She wished she could deny her name, but she nodded stiffly, walking toward them.

There were two of them: a fat one swathed in purple, and a thin one in a lime-green polyester pantsuit and teased, bleached blond hair. She knew them—they were the unwanted, they were the sort of people she had been lumped in with at school, always the last to be chosen for teams or dances. Her mother had pushed them on her, inviting them to parties, but Sheila had preferred loneliness to their company. She always shunned them rather than admit that she was like them.

"How do you do," said the thin one. "I'm Victoria Walcek, and this is Grace Baxter."

Victoria would be smart, Sheila knew. Too smart for her own good. A bookworm with a sharp tongue and too many opinions, no one would like her, but she would exert a special influence over one or two followers, dull, timid outcasts like her fat friend.

"Your plane was late," said Victoria.

The tone was reproving, and before she could catch herself Sheila said, "I'm sorry."

Victoria smiled. "That's all right. We didn't mind waiting. Do you have much luggage coming?"

"Only this." She indicated the small case.

Victoria gave a dainty shriek. "That's *all*? How do you manage? I couldn't possibly ... my hot-curlers and make-up would just about fill that little bag. I always need a big garment bag whenever I go anywhere. I suppose I worry too much about the way I look ... I like to have everything just right. It's much more sensible to travel light and just not think about that."

"Sheila looks very nice," said Grace with so much emphasis that it sounded like a lie. Sheila tried not to mind, but she wished Grace hadn't felt obliged to defend her. She knew how she looked: more fashionable and far more comfortable in her pink and grey track-suit than Victoria in her ugly green polyester and high-necked ruffled blouse.

"Of course she does," said Victoria. "I didn't mean to imply otherwise! Only with that little bag ... well, there can't be more than one change of clothes in there."

"I'm only staying the weekend."

"Oh," said Grace, sounding surprised. "We thought you'd want to stay ... being from Texas, and all."

"I only came for the convention. I can't afford—I need to get back."

"To your writing?" asked Grace.

**They were the unwanted,  
always the last to be chosen  
for teams or dances.  
She always shunned them  
rather than admit  
she was like them.**

The lie came easily. "Yes, I've started a new book."

"Oh, please tell us about it!"

"Wait until we get to the car," said Victoria—her sharpness might have been directed at either of them or both. "We've still got a long way to go." She turned with a twitch of her narrow shoulders which said she didn't care if she was followed or not, and Sheila felt trapped into hurrying after.

"How far are we from Byzantium?"

"Fifty miles," said Grace, huffing and puffing beside her.

"Fifty! I had no idea—"

Victoria glanced over her shoulder. "I thought you came from Texas?"

"Not this part."

Victoria exhaled sharply. It sounded like disbelief, but Sheila couldn't imagine why.

Outside the darkness and heat disoriented Sheila, who remembered the cool, blue Los Angeles evening she had so recently left. She knew nothing about this place, she thought as Victoria steered the big car away from the lights and out into the unrelieved blackness of the vast, country night. There was nothing on which she could focus but the stars winking in the distance, or the bright, white line down the center of the highway.

"Now tell us about your new book," said Grace from behind her. "Is it a sequel to *Moonlight Under the Mountain*? I loved that book so much!"

"No, how could it be? Kayli escapes at the end—she's found the secret of the grenofen and can travel. She's free at last. How could there be a sequel?"

"Well, she might have to go back. Maybe there could be a friend she wants to rescue. Or she could be kidnapped ... most of the grenofen are still under the mountain."

"It would just be boring to send her back," said Sheila. "The new book will be something completely different."

"Grace writes too," said Victoria. "Maybe you would be kind enough, while you are visiting here, to read something of hers and critique it."

Sheila stared into the blackness, wondering what sort of landscape the night concealed. Sud-

denly the headlights swept across a small herd of jackrabbits by the side of the road. One of them was sitting up on his haunches and gazing, with dazzled eyes, directly at her. A thrill of strangeness made her smile. Here was something to tell Derek!

"Of course I will if Grace wants me to. How about you, Victoria—do you write, too?"

"Oh, no. My talents lie in another direction," said Victoria primly. "In my own small way I am something of an artist. My interests are in painting, sketching, and in fashion and costume design. You'll see my latest efforts at the convention."

"Wait'll you see!" cried Grace, bouncing hard on the back seat.

"Sit still!"

Grace subsided as if bludgeoned. Sheila felt sorry for her, and yet contemptuous, for she invited such treatment by allowing it. As mile after dark mile passed and Sheila felt civilization—even if only represented by the Campbell County airport—growing more distant, she realized that she was even more dependent upon Victoria's good will than Grace was. She could be trapped here in this strange desert, with no car, no money, no friends, no knowledge of her surroundings, if Victoria decided Sheila wasn't deserving of her attention. It was a crazy notion, sheer paranoia, and yet she knew nothing about these people. Why had they invited her? Why had she come?

Out of the darkness came the familiar, cheery glow of a Ramada Inn sign, and Sheila felt a rush of relief that made her smile. Whatever was out there—in the darkness, whoever these two people were, she knew, now, where she was.

The clock above the registration desk showed nearly midnight, and Sheila yawned reflexively, reminding herself that it was an hour earlier in Los Angeles, and wondering what Derek was doing. Was he thinking of her?

Victoria's melodramatic shriek sliced into her thoughts.

"I did," said Grace in a high, terrified voice. "I did reserve a room, honestly I did!"

"Yes, I know," said the desk clerk. "And I'm real sorry. But we couldn't keep it for you. Our check-in time is seven p.m. It's the same all over the country. You can request us to hold the room for as many hours after that as you like, but unless the request is made, after seven p.m. we assume that registered guest is a no-show, and we give the room to someone else. And all our rooms are taken tonight."

"But I didn't know," Grace wailed. "It's not my fault that I didn't know."

"It is your fault," said Victoria in arctic tones. "I gave you the responsibility of reserving the room, and that includes finding out check-in times."

Sheila had the feeling that they would go on arguing whose fault it was all night and she would still be without a place to sleep. "Isn't there some other



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motel?" she asked.

"Are you kidding?" said Victoria.

"There's one over by Taylor," said the desk clerk. "It's a Holiday Inn, but I'd be happy to make a phone call to check if they've got a room for you."

"No," said Victoria sharply. "Taylor's thirty miles from here. I'm not driving all that way there and back. You can stay with me tonight. Luckily, I have two beds in my room. I know it won't be as nice for you, and I'm sorry about this. I apologize for Grace's stupidity—shut up, Grace. You won't mind sharing a room with me, will you?"

"Well, I don't think I really have a choice, do I?" said Sheila. She knew she was being ungracious and forced herself to sound grateful. "It's very nice of you to offer. Thank you."

The town of Byzantium was four miles further down the highway, and in the darkness Sheila received no clear impression of it. A yellow buglight on the porch revealed Victoria's house as an ordinary, one-story, white-painted frame house of the sort she'd often seen elsewhere. There was nothing special or unusual about it. But the moment she stepped inside she broke into a sweat of fear. It was only Victoria's physical presence at her back which kept her from bolting, and after another moment she realized that it was the smell of the house she had responded to so powerfully. It was the smell of her mother's house, as if she had fallen back in time. But there was nothing mysterious or even unlikely about it—just an unfortunate combination of a particular brand of furniture polish, air freshener, and a whiff of bacon grease.

"Keep quiet," Victoria breathed at her ear. "Just follow me. Mom's asleep." Still shaken by the physical force of memory, Sheila obeyed. Victoria had told her in the car that she lived with her widowed mother.

"Welcome to my sanctum sanctorum," said Victoria, and closed the bedroom door. Sheila was not usually bothered by claustrophobia, but as the door closed she felt her throat tighten and she began to have trouble breathing. The room was so crowded with books, furniture and clutter that it felt more like a store-closet than a place to live. Sheila looked around, trying to relax by taking in details.

There was a fussy pink and white dressing table with a lighted mirror, narrow twin beds separated by a chest of drawers, a slant-topped professional drawing table and adjustable chair, and bookshelves covering two walls overstuffed with books and seeming to strain at their moorings. Sheila looked at one of the beds and at the burdened shelves above it, and hoped that nothing would fall on her in the night. Where there was wall space not covered with books, paintings, and photographs had been mounted. Sheila recognized various famous movie and television stars in customary poses but the paintings were uninspired: landscapes in unlikely

colors, and stiff, mannered depictions of dragons, unicorns, and strangely dressed people.

"Most of the art is mine," said Victoria. "But I won't bore you with my creations right now." She giggled. "Oh, it's so exciting, having a real live author in my very own room!"

Sheila realized suddenly that the bossy Victoria wasn't as self-confident as she pretended—that she was actually shy—but the understanding didn't change her feelings. Of course it wasn't Victoria's fault that this house reminded her of her own past, or that, in Victoria's nagging and bossing of Grace, Sheila heard her mother's disappointment: *Would it kill you to show a little interest? To be friendly?*

Yes, she thought now, it *would* have killed her. If she had made friends and found contentment in the life her mother wanted for her it would have killed her soul. She would never have written. She would have felt no need to escape.

She looked at Victoria's pinched, sourly hopeful face. Victoria was trapped, even if she didn't know it, but Sheila had escaped. She could afford to show a little kindness.

"It's a very nice room," she said. "You'll have to show me your designs in the morning . . . not right now because I'm too tired to appreciate anything but bed."

"Oh, silly me! Of course you're tired—I forgot how late it is. It's just that I'm so excited."

Sheila decided she liked Victoria even less when she was giggly and excited, but there was no escape from her now except into silence and herself: the same old thing.

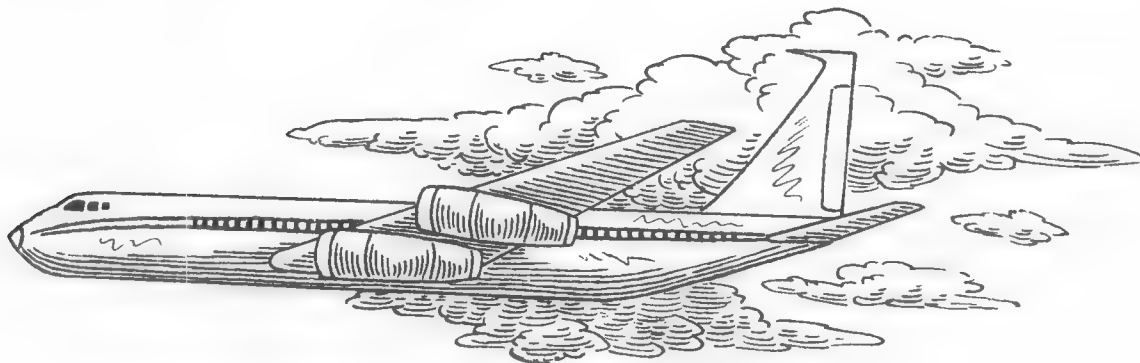
"It's like being a kid again, having someone spend the night," Victoria said in the darkness. "Didn't you used to love going to slumber parties?"

Sheila had been to only one slumber party, attending under pressure from her mother. She did now what she had done then and pretended to sleep. But she lay awake for what seemed hours, listening to Victoria's adenoidal breathing and hearing, behind it, her mother's voice: *Think you're better than all the other girls? Too good to talk to them? You think you're different?*

She knew she was different. She knew she was better. The hard part was to hang on to that knowledge, and resist all those who tried to make her ordinary.

**S**heila woke feeling as exhausted as if she had been struggling rather than sleeping all night, and when she saw herself in the bathroom mirror it was clear that she had lost the struggle.

There were days when she liked her face, but this was not one of them. Make up didn't really help, and her hair was hopeless. Confronted with the change in atmosphere and the dry, gritty wind of West Texas, it seemed the permanent had given up,



leaving her with a lank, lifeless, mousy brown mop.

Her clothes, which had looked so fresh and fashionable in California, now looked drab and badly cut. They were wrinkled from having been packed, and they no longer fit: the fabric of the skirt stretched unattractively tight across stomach and hips, while the blouse simply hung on her. Sheila had the eerie feeling that she had changed shape overnight. She sucked in her stomach as hard as she could and turned away from the mirror, not ready to face Byzantium, but having no other choice.

Daylight revealed what had been hidden by the night: towering above ordinary frame houses and scrubby trees was a vast, looming presence, a rugged brown peak. "What's that?"

Victoria smiled disbelievingly. "What do you think? It's the mountain."

She was finding it hard to breathe—probably the effect of holding in her stomach, but it felt as if she was afraid. Of the mountain? That was silly. "I just didn't realize there would be a mountain here."

"Oh, come on!"

"No, really. I thought this part of Texas was all flat."

Another hard look from Victoria. "But it's the most famous thing about Byzantium, our mountain."

That made Sheila laugh, despite her unease. "Look, no offense, but famous is not a word I'd use about Byzantium! I'd never even heard of your town until you wrote me."

"Really? And you've never been here before?"

"Never."

"Well. That is a surprise. I'd better show you why. We'll go up where you can see it all ... why don't you close your eyes until I tell you to look? It'll be more impressive that way."

Most of the drive was a gradual ascent—too gentle to be up the mountain, and it seemed to Sheila that the car was traveling away from the peak. It was not long before the car pulled to a stop and Victoria said, "You can open your eyes now."

They were outside of town, up on a ridge, in a roadside parking area created especially for the view: there were coin-operated telescopes there, and a map mounted behind plastic with the state high-

way department seal on it. Sheila took in the view mechanically, eyes scanning the distance, the hazy blue sky and a line of faraway mountains, then, just below, on the flat valley floor, the town of Byzantium, buildings clustered around the single peak rising like some rough, hunched beast furred brown and green.

And then she saw what she was seeing. She knew this landscape—and she had been here many times before. She had invented the town, the mountain, and the wasteland beyond. She had written it into existence.

"See?" said Victoria. "You had to come here."

**T**he Ramada Inn had what they called a conference center, and it was there—a detached, windowless, concrete building on the other side of the swimming pool—that the First Byzantium Science Fiction Convention was held.

When Sheila and Victoria arrived they found Grace sitting behind a table near the door, with a cashbox and a list of names.

"We've had fifteen people so far," she said, looking apprehensively up at Victoria. "I think that's pretty good for the first hour."

"How many are you expecting?" Sheila asked.

"A lot," said Victoria "science fiction is big business these days, and there's never been a convention in this part of the state. I'm sure it'll be a big success. Here, put this name tag on. I designed it especially, so people can pick you out as the Guest of Honor."

"What am I supposed to do?"

"This evening you'll judge the costume contest. Until then, just enjoy yourself. Give the fans a chance to talk to you. Be friendly."

Sheila felt tired and uncertain of herself. She wanted to retreat, having seldom felt less like talking to strangers. But she had agreed to come and must make an effort. She moved away from the registration desk to begin her tour of the convention.

The conference center consisted of the small reception area where Grace sat, three small seminar rooms and one big hall. In one seminar room Sheila found four boys and two girls huddled in a circle

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with dice and notebooks, playing Dungeons and Dragons. They didn't even look up when she entered, too involved with their fantasy to notice her.

The next seminar room contained eight or ten dark shapes gazing at a television screen upon which flickered an episode of "The Prisoner."

The main hall had a podium and microphone set up at the far end, unused. At the near end several tables had been set up, and people were selling used paperbacks, comics, posters, little clay and metal figurines, and other paraphernalia. Some artwork was displayed, and Sheila recognized the paintings as Victoria's work.

People of both sexes, most of them apparently in their teens or early twenties, milled around the room. Sheila noticed a very fat man in a kilt, with a plastic sword belted at his side, and a skinny young woman in a black knitted mini-dress who might have been attractive beneath the layer of green paint she wore over all exposed flesh. But even the people not in costume—the boy reading a paperback novel on the floor, frowning in fierce concentration; the acned young man whose shirt-pocket bulged with different colored pens; the girl talking into a tape recorder—seemed to exist in some other, private universe, and even if she had found any of them the slightest bit attractive, Sheila could not have approached without feeling herself an intruder.

"Excuse me, are you Sheila Stoller?"

Sheila turned to see an ordinary looking teenager, a girl in bluejeans and a pink t-shirt, holding up a copy of *Moonlight Under the Mountain* in much the way that people in horror films presented crosses to vampires. She smiled with relief and pleasure. This was what she was here for, after all: to be the author.

"Yes I am."

"Oh!" The girl sounded surprised. "I thought—I don't know—I thought you'd look more—like a writer."

"How is that? With thick glasses and a typewriter tucked under my arm?"

"No, I thought you'd be more glamorous. Well, would you sign my book? Make it out to Lori."

Sheila did as she was told. "Did you like it?"

"Oh, I haven't read it yet. I bought it because somebody told me it was sort of like Anne McCaffrey. I love Anne McCaffrey. I've read everything she's ever written. I was hoping they could get her to come here, but ... Thanks for the autograph. It was nice meeting you." She slouched away, leaving Sheila bemused. Was that it? Was that why she was here, to disappoint Anne McCaffrey fans and sign unread books?

She went back to the registration area to find Victoria and Grace, and was discouraged to find that even they were no longer interested in her. It was an effort to make them talk, and as she strug-

gled she wondered why she was bothering.

"So ... Victoria, you're interested in art. Do you plan to study it professionally, go to art school, or ... were you an art major in college?"

Victoria looked at her coldly. "I didn't go to college. As I told you last night. It wasn't possible. We couldn't afford it, and mother couldn't really do without me. Mother has problems with her health. As I told you."

Sheila felt herself getting hot. She didn't know how to apologize without making things worse. She should have been paying attention instead of daydreaming, as usual. "I'm sorry ... I was tired last night, and ..."

"You were probably thinking of me," Grace said, "I went to college."

"And much good it did you," said Victoria. "You can't get a job with your history degree now, can you? I've got a job in cosmetics, at Eckerd Drugs. I get a discount on all my perfume and makeup. It's a good deal. And it's a pretty creative job, sometimes. It calls for someone like me with taste and a good eye for color, to tell the ladies what lipstick would suit them, and how to put on blusher to make the most of their own features. You should have seen the make-over I did for Grace! I don't know why she doesn't fix herself up like that all the time. It would only take a half hour in the morning, and it makes all the difference in the world!"

Grace was getting steadily redder, and glaring at her feet. Sheila tried to feel some sympathy for her, but was too repelled. Did she have to be so fat and her hair so greasy? Makeup would probably only aggravate her skin problems, but surely she could make some effort.

"It might even help you get a job," Victoria went on. "If you looked more ..."

"Don't want a job," Grace mumbled. She raised her head defiantly. "I need time to write." She looked at Sheila. "Don't you? Don't you need time to write?"

Before Sheila could think of how to answer, Victoria spoke for her. "But you also need to earn a living," she said. "You can't sponge off your parents forever. You're twenty-four."

"So? They don't mind."

"But for how long? And how long before you actually finish your novel? You're too comfortable; you think you've got all the time in the world. How many years have you been working on it? Three? Four?"

Sheila was beginning to feel Grace's discomfort as her own, as if Victoria's jabs had been aimed at her. This was a familiar, old quarrel, but it was nothing to do with her. She wouldn't even try to break it up. She only wanted to get away and leave them to it.

Looking at her watch, Sheila said, "Maybe I should check into my room now. There doesn't seem



**"Oh!"**  
**The girl sounded surprised.**  
**"I thought you'd**  
**look more like a writer.**  
**I thought you'd**  
**be more glamorous."**

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to be too much going on, and I'd like a chance to put my things away and maybe have a shower."

Victoria and Grace looked at each other in a way that made Sheila's heart sink.

"I'm not saying this is your fault," said Victoria carefully. "Don't get me wrong. But we haven't had as many people register for the convention as we had hoped for."

"How could that be *my* fault?"

"Well, a big name guest will draw more people ... but I'm not saying it *is* your fault, you understand. If people didn't come to see you, it's our fault for assuming that everybody would like *Moonlight Under the Mountain* as much as us ... but that's probably not the reason, anyway. Grace probably didn't coordinate the publicity and press releases well enough—never mind, Grace, I'm not blaming you."

"I don't understand. If you don't think it's my fault, why are you telling me?"

"Well, of course it's not your fault! And no matter *how* much money we lose on this, Grace and I will feel that it was worth it to get you to come here. I knew when I wrote it was worth it to get you to come here. I knew when I wrote out the check for your airplane ticket that I probably wasn't going to get my money back, and that isn't important. The thing is, we just don't have that much money left over ... for nonessentials. And since I've got a spare bed anyway ..."

Sheila just stared at her, refusing to give in.

Victoria sighed. "We just can't afford to pay for your hotel room. I'm sorry about that. But you are more than welcome to go on sharing my room. Like last night. You didn't mind sharing, did you?"

She couldn't answer honestly; she was trapped. Sheila bowed her head, giving in. She was doing figures in her head, furiously, but she already knew she couldn't afford to rent her own hotel room. She thought, longingly, of Derek, wondering how he would handle the situation. But Derek would never be in such a situation, she felt certain. His agent would have arranged everything better than she had been able to do for herself.

"Excuse me for a few minutes," she said. "I have to make a phone call ... I have to let my boyfriend know where I'll be."

But Derek wasn't in. Of course, it was silly of

her to have expected him to be sitting home in the middle of the day, but that made no difference to her disappointment.

She hung around the lobby for another twenty minutes, unwilling to return to the convention, leaning against the wall by the telephone as if waiting for a call. She wondered if she was expecting too much of Derek. She thought of them as a couple—an awareness of him and what he would think informed of all her actions—but to him, she thought reasonably, she was probably just another girlfriend. They had made no promises to each other. She knew it wasn't fair to blame him for anything—for this trip to Texas, for not being in when she needed him—that was like Victoria, always apportioning blame. But although she fought against it, that was the way she felt.

**W**e'll take you out for a nice dinner," Victoria said. "Our treat."

It wasn't Sheila's idea of a treat: a drive to Byzantium to feast, far inland, in a Long John Silver Seafood Shoppe. The fried fish and potatoes were almost tasteless, but Sheila covered them with ketchup and ate her way steadily through the meal. It was a way of not thinking, of not caring that Victoria and Grace could chatter away about private concerns as if she was not there. She was still thinking, painfully, of Derek, and finally, when the food was gone and they lingered over large paper cups of iced tea, she couldn't keep it to herself any longer. She told them about Derek.

She didn't say a word about her doubts: she wanted to impress them. It was such a joy to speak of him possessively, casually, and to see the dim, faint envy on their faces. Any boyfriend at all was good, but Derek was a tv star. They knew how handsome he was, how desirable.

She was explaining how they had first met when Victoria interrupted. "Come on, girls, we've got things to do. We've got to get back to the Ramada. We'll stop at the Dunkin' Donuts on the way for our dessert."

Sheila was irritated at being cut off, but knowing Victoria's jealousy must be responsible made it easier to bear. She had proven just how different her life was from the lonely existence Victoria and Grace had to suffer, and Victoria couldn't like the reminder.

At the convention, Sheila was left alone with the box of donuts while Victoria and Grace went off to prepare for the costume contest. Sheila was the judge, but she didn't feel burdened: nothing was really at stake. The only prize was a scroll hand-decorated by Victoria.

There were only eight entries, and two of them were jokes more than costumes: an Invisible Man, and a "Time Traveler in Authentic Costume of the 1980s." Sheila leaned on the podium in the darkened

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hall, unable to see the audience for the glare of the spotlights, and watched the contestants parade slowly past: a mangy Wookiee, a scantily-clad Amazon, a Vulcan couple who performed a pretend marriage ceremony, and the green-painted girl she had noticed earlier, now wearing a diaphanous gown and huge painted cardboard wings.

Victoria and Grace came last and when they emerged from darkness into light Sheila did not recognize them. She saw, not strangers, but two characters she knew very well, her own creatures come to life.

She saw Kayli, triumphant in red velvet, brandishing a gleaming sword, leading a hunch-backed, shaggy, conquered grenofen on a leash.

Her heart threatened to choke her, and she leaned forward, nearly dislodging the microphone, to peer against the dazzle of the spotlights, trying to see through the illusion.

Fake-fur and a *papier mâché* head could disguise Grace, but how on earth had the unattractive Victoria been transformed to Kayli, as noble, heroic and beautiful as Sheila had always known her to be?

Was it possible that Kayli was *real*? That she wasn't an invention, but a real person, a resident of Byzantium, and Victoria had found her? What magic was this?

But it was all illusion, even if she couldn't penetrate it. Of course Kayli and the grenofen were only Victoria and Grace, revealed when they came forward to accept their prize.

Later, sharing the few remaining donuts and listening to Grace's delight at having won, Sheila could hardly take her eyes from Victoria. The glamor of Kayli clung to her still, making her eyes shine and her cheeks glow, giving her plain, sharp features a beauty Sheila envied.

"Weren't the costumes just perfect?" Grace demanded again. "Weren't they just exactly how you imagined they would look when you were writing the book, Sheila?"

Sick at heart, yet she could not deny it. Sheila pretended her mouth was too full to speak, and nodded. She knew her denial would have no difference: Victoria had triumphed, and they both knew it.

Now Victoria smiled graciously. "It's nice of you to say so, Sheila. Of course, this prize should be *yours* just as much as ours, because without you . . . well, without you there wouldn't be a Kayli. You created her first, in your book. And then I was fortunate enough to be able to bring her to another kind of life."

You stole her from me, Sheila wanted to say. Kayli was mine, Kayli was me—you took her away and you had no right. But although that was what she felt, Sheila knew well enough how it would sound. She could say nothing. Once *Moonlight Under the Mountain* had been published, anyone

could know Kayli. There might even be someone, like Victoria, who had more claim on Kayli now than Sheila did. Sheila, after all, had scarcely thought of Kayli since she sent her in her book out into the world. She had not thought of her as a real person until she saw her in Victoria.

It wasn't until later, after they had dropped off Grace at her house and driven back to Victoria's, that Sheila realized she had been robbed of something more concrete than a fictional character.

"My suitcase!"

"What?"

"My overnight bag," Sheila said, twisting feverishly around in the seat. "Do you remember what I did with it? Did we put it in the trunk?" Even as she asked she could remember too well, how she had slung it into the back seat, and she could see that it was not there.

"You didn't say anything about it to me. Why on earth did you bring it? Why didn't you just leave it here at home?"

"Because I thought I would be staying in the hotel."

"Oh, Sheila," said Victoria in the weary tone she used so often with Grace. "You don't mean to tell me you left it in my car all day—unlocked!"

"It's your car. I thought you'd lock it!"

"Don't shout at me. If you'd said anything, I would have suggested we lock it in the trunk. I never imagined you'd leave something valuable in the car."

"It wasn't valuable. It was just my clothes, my notebook—" the magnitude of her loss struck her and she stopped, struggling against tears. All lost. Everything she owned in this desolate place.

"Now, don't cry," said Victoria. "That'll only make you feel worse. Things will look better in the morning. Let's go to bed."

She let Victoria lead her to the house but balked at the bedroom door. "I want to use the phone."

"At this hour!"

"It's earlier in California. Please. I have to. It's important. The operator can bill me."

"I do not think this is a good idea," said Victoria in a tight, disapproving voice. "But if you insist, the phone is in the kitchen. Try not to wake mother, please."

Derek would be able to put everything into perspective. She knew that if she could only hear his voice things would be better. She would realize that she hadn't lost everything, only a few material possessions. She could buy herself new clothes, and Derek would give her another notebook. But she needed to hear him say so.

His service picked up the call. No, he wasn't in, no he had left no message for her, no she really couldn't say when he would be back. Sheila left her name with Victoria's phone number. "Tell me to call whatever time it is, morning or night. Tell him it's



urgent." She didn't care if the ringing of the phone woke the whole house. The most important thing was to make contact again with her life in California, to convince herself that it was real and this place the fantasy. The sound of Derek saying her name would wake her from this nightmare of loss and confusion.

She tried not to think of what could happen if Derek didn't phone back. She told herself that she was over-tired, and that things would look better in the morning, even if it was Victoria who had said so.

Things looked different in the morning, but not better.

It began when Sheila lost a contact lens down the drain. In three years she'd had no problems, but after one moment of sleepy carelessness in a strange bathroom she had no choice but to put on her old glasses. Then she saw herself—really saw herself—in the big, bathroom mirror, and she wanted to scream in protest.

She was not, she refused to be, the person she saw in the mirror. That was the old Sheila blinking through thick, smudged lenses, the self she had outgrown, with lank, greasy hair, dandruff and pimples. That Sheila was so fat she could scarcely fasten her skirt, despite the fact that it had fit the day before.

Sheila reached out, and the creature in the mirror reached, too, until they were touching. They were the same. She didn't want to believe it, but she had no choice. She was trapped in that hateful body again, as if she had never been different.

Victoria's voice came through the door. "Hurry up in there, we've got to get moving! Your guest of

honor speech is scheduled for an hour from now!"

Her speech was inside the lost notebook. Sheila began to tremble. She had no idea what she had written, what the words said. She knew she couldn't give a speech without that text. She unlocked the door and told Victoria.

Victoria, dressed like a Victorian governess in a high-necked white blouse and a long grey skirt, her face made up like a doll's with smears of blue eye-shadow and rosy blusher, did not hesitate. "You'll give the speech. I don't care what you say. But you will give the speech."

"You can't make me."

Victoria settled her glasses. She didn't look angry. There was the hint of a smile about her mouth. "We paid to bring you here, and people have paid to hear your speech. Those people aren't going to be let down. Somebody is going to give Sheila Stoller's speech, even if it has to be me."

Sheila felt her mouth go dry.

"I can talk about your book as well as you can, probably better," Victoria went on. "I've read it four times; I *know* it. You saw how I was as Kayli. I could be the author of *Moonlight Under the Mountain* just as easily. I can tell them what they want to hear—better than you could."

Sheila believed her. She shook her head.

"Oh, yes," said Victoria. "If you don't believe me—"

"I'll give the speech."

Victoria's smile settled and hardened. "I know you will."

"I need to make a phone call," Sheila said.

"Who?"

"My boyfriend." She clung to that last, fragile hope. Even though he had not returned her call, he had to be in now—it was a Sunday morning—and as soon as he picked up the phone and heard who it was, his voice would go warm and teasing. Her fears would all vanish in the sunshine of his love. "Derek," she said, savoring his name. "I told you about him yesterday—"

"Oh, come off it, Sheila! Nobody believes you. It's so childish to pretend you know Derek Greene."

"I'm not pretending!" She tried to laugh, but it sounded more like a sob.

"Oh, no? And did you have a nice little conversation with him last night?"

"I couldn't get through to him last night."

"Well, I'm glad you're still in touch with reality to that extent."

Sheila was shaking. She wished it was with anger, but it felt like fear. "Look," she said. "I'm not lying to you, and I'm not crazy. I'm in love with Derek Greene, and—"

"Oh, yes, I'm not questioning *your* feelings. But that doesn't mean you can phone him up, or that you have any special privileges, you know." Her hands fastened clawlike on Sheila's shoulders and she



# Flying to Byzantium

steered her down the hall, into the bedroom. "I'm going to show you something. Look there on the wall."

She hadn't noticed it before—individual photographs tended to get lost among the many taped and tacked up around the room—but now she saw the picture which had appeared in *People Magazine*, the posed shot of Derek and three of his co-stars from the new series. Her heart beat faster at his familiar smile. "Oh, yes, I know that picture—"

But already Victoria was turning her away from it, allowing her no comfort, turning her towards the frilly dressing table with its make-up mirror. "Now look at that. Look at yourself. Do you expect me to believe that Derek Greene would even consider going out with something that looks like *that*?"

But that's not *me*, Sheila wanted to protest. That's not the Sheila Derek knows; that's not who I am in California, in my real life. It's this place which has changed me.

"What really disgusts me," said Victoria, "Is the way you don't even make an effort. You could try to make something of yourself, the way I do. Learn to use make-up and how to do your hair; eat sensibly, and follow my advice on clothes. But, no, you'd rather stuff your face with food and sit around all day imagining that television stars are in love with you. You'll never change, and I don't know why I knock myself out trying to help you."

Staring at the horror in the mirror, Sheila began to cry. The great, wrenching sobs reddened her face, making her even uglier, and she felt the button on her skirt pop, and cried even harder at the hopelessness of her life.

"Your own mother wouldn't know you," said Victoria, satisfied, and Sheila gazed into the mirror thinking that she wouldn't have known herself, either. Victoria had made up her face, covering the spots and making her eyes look bigger; her hair was hidden beneath a brightly patterned scarf, and her body in a tentlike yellow dress borrowed from Grace. She felt uneasy with her new image, but at least it was an improvement on the old one.

When they reached the convention they found between twenty and thirty people gathered in the main hall, waiting for Sheila's speech—about half the number who had registered.

"Now, don't be afraid," said Victoria. "They're just ordinary people, like you. Say anything you want to them."

"Anything," said Sheila dazedly. "What ..."

"Tell them how you wrote your book."

"I don't ... I can't remember ... What can I say?"

Victoria stared at her. "Do you want me to give the speech?"

Sheila backed away, shaking her head. She couldn't remember why, but she knew she must do this herself. She must not give Victoria the chance to

... what?

"What are you waiting for?" demanded Victoria. "Go on, they're waiting."

Sheila stumbled toward the podium. In the large room the sound of applause was feeble and sporadic. As it died away, she stared out at them, her audience. Who were they? They all wore glasses; most of them looked adolescent. She was reminded, horribly, of the time her mother had pressured her into trying out for the debating society, and how she had gone utterly blank in front of them all, without a word in her head. Just like now.

The silence stretched. The sound of her own breathing was horribly loud. Her hands clenched, and she realized she was holding something. When she looked down, her own name blazed up at her in yellow letters. It was her book, a copy of *Moonlight Under the Mountain*. With shaking fingers she opened it and began to read.

Gradually the familiar words, the well-known story, Kayli's presence, all soothed her, and she was dreaming aloud, the audience forgotten. At the end of a chapter she looked up, paused because her throat was dry, and was startled by the burst of applause.

She thought it would be all right to leave, then, but as she turned, Victoria blocked her way. Her face was grim, and Sheila backed up, feeling threatened.

"I'm sure we all enjoyed that very much," said Victoria. "And now, perhaps you'll say a few words about how you came to write what you've just read us?"

Sheila shook her head, incapable of speech.

But Victoria seemed to have expected that, and scarcely paused. "Questions from the audience, then. Does anyone have a question they'd like to ask Sheila Stoller? No? Well, I'll start the old ball rolling then. About the setting of your novel, Sheila ... what made you choose Byzantium?"

"I didn't—I didn't choose it!"

"It chose you?" The audience laughed at her inflection, and Sheila felt herself blushing. Victoria said kindly, "I suppose it was a natural affinity. You felt a connection to this place and so you wrote about it. Writers do that all the time, turning their lives into fiction. And what about Kayli? What can you tell us about her? Is she based on someone real?"

It went on, with Victoria asking questions Sheila could not answer, and then answering them herself. Sheila no longer knew if she agreed or disagreed with the things Victoria was saying; she hardly knew what she was talking about, whose book or life they were discussing.

**I**t ended, finally; not only the interrogation but the whole convention, and Sheila went with Victoria and Grace for lunch in the coffee shop. She was glad that they talked to each other and left her alone to eat, but when the meal was over she glanced

**The great wrenching sobs  
reddened her face,  
making her even uglier.  
"Your own mother  
wouldn't know you,"  
said Victoria,  
satisfied.**

at her watch and fidgeted, working up the courage to say, finally, "Isn't it getting kind of late?"

"Late for what? Was there something on tv—you-know-who isn't on tonight, is he?"

Sheila felt herself blushing. She wasn't going to talk about Derek; she would pretend she hadn't heard. "I just don't want to miss my plane," she said.

Victoria stared in disbelief, and Sheila's certainty crumbled. "It ... is tonight, isn't it? Not tomorrow?" She couldn't spend another night with Victoria; another night and she might never get away, she thought.

"What are you babbling about, Sheila?" said Victoria, as wearily as if this was an old, old question.

Sheila dug in her bag for the ticket, praying that it had not been stolen, too, but there it was; she pulled it out, seeing the stiff blue folder enclosing the flimsy ticket, but when she looked at it more closely she froze. It was a one-way ticket. There could no mistake, yet she stared, willing herself to be wrong, reading it again and again. Had it changed in the same way and for the same occult reasons as she had herself? Why hadn't she noticed before? She was certain that she could not have left Los Angeles with only a one-way ticket in her hand—not a one-way ticket to Texas, and no money for her return.

"I can't stay here," she said. "I have to go back."

"Where would you go back?"

"Home. Los Angeles."

"That's not your home. What's in Los Angeles? Derek Greene? Your imaginary boyfriend? You really think he'll notice if you're in Los Angeles or in Texas?"

"But I live there—I have an apartment and a job—"

"You don't. You've been making things up again. People like you don't live in Hollywood. You wouldn't fit in. You're much better off here, where you belong. You can stay in my room, and I might even be able to wangle you a job at Eckerd's. It's not a bad place to work. You'll have time to write. You'll settle down."

She wanted to argue, but everything she thought she knew had slipped away. What could she give as proof? Derek? The apartment? the series of temporary jobs in glamorous locations? All those things

felt unreal now, as if she had only seen them on television. "I won't stay here ... you can't make me."

"How ungrateful!" said Grace, and Sheila looked at her, really for the first time since she had met her. She was shocked by the envy and hatred she saw on the fat, white face.

"She doesn't mean to be rude," said Victoria. "She just doesn't understand."

"Oh yes I do," said Sheila, although she didn't. "I'm not stupid, I can see what you're doing to me. Changing me, confusing me, trapping me. All right, you've got me now, but not forever. Maybe I can't afford to leave now, with twenty dollars in my purse, but it won't take me long to get out of here. I'm not like you. I got away once before. It's not just dreaming. I had another life—the life I wanted. A life you'll never know. I wrote a book and had it published."

"You think that makes you special?"

"I know it does. I'm different from you."

Victoria adjusted her glasses, checked the top button on her blouse, and moistened her lips. "You may be different," she said in her thin, colorless voice, "But you need us. Don't blame us for that. We didn't trick you into coming here; nobody forced you to use that ticket. You wanted to come back, so we helped you. Hollywood was no good for you. You couldn't measure up, and you couldn't write anymore. You wanted escape but you didn't know where or how. So we helped you. You're safe here, and you can stay as long as you like." She looked down at her empty plate, wiped her mouth with a folded napkin and said, "I think we might as well go home, now, don't you?"

Not my home, thought Sheila, but she followed them out to the car. During the dark, familiar drive back to Byzantium she was thinking furiously, planning her escape.

Money was the most important thing, so she would get a job, even if it meant working in a drugstore with Victoria. She didn't have to pay attention to her. And she would go on a diet and start exercising to lose this flab; get a facial scrub and do something about her hair, buy herself some more clothes and when she was herself again she'd fly back to Los Angeles and take up her real life.

Sheila leaned back against the seat, feeling something inside her unknot. With all that out of way, she could think about something more interesting. It was as easy as dreaming.

Kayli was under the mountain again, although Sheila wasn't sure exactly why. Kayli didn't know, either. Her mind was cloudy with drugs, and someone had tied her hands behind her and left her in this dark turning of one of the tunnels. She didn't know where she was or what she had to do, but she would triumph. Despite her confusion, despite the constraints, her will was unbroken. All through the night she planned her escape. 17

# Through the Safety Net

*Something dreadful was going to occur—that much was clear.  
And only that much.*

by CHARLES BAXTER

**D**r. Nadler, the dentist, was eating the sole almondine luncheon plate at La Maison Blanche when she was paged.

"The psychic called," her husband said. "He says for you to call him right back, the next half hour. He has some errands to run this afternoon and won't be reachable after one o'clock. Same with me. I gotta go. See you tonight. Bye."

She asked how to make an outgoing call. She dialed nine first, as instructed, then the psychic's number. "This is Dinah Nadler," she said when he answered. "What's up?"

"We need to make an appointment," the psychic said. Then he blew his nose, making an odd sound, a long wet snort. "Excuse me," he said, "but it's just a cold. One of those sinus colds that started as an ear cold. My nephews were in last week from Boston with their mother, and they all brought these little coughs and sneezes with them. Cute but contagious. Well. What about this afternoon? It's important."

"Busy," she said. "I have appointments."

"How about tomorrow?"

"Four o'clock," she told him. "Not a minute earlier."

"Fine," the psychic said. His name was Herbert. "I'll be here, ready and waiting."

At four fifteen she knocked at the psychic's

apartment, which also served as his office. "Come in," he said.

"How's the cold?" she asked. She sat down in a shabby dark blue overstuffed chair. She looked at the two pictures on the wall, one of a woodland stream, the other on a watermill, and immediately felt depressed.

The psychic's nose was red from post-nasal drip. "It's getting better," he said. "I'll be over it by tomorrow. How are you, Dinah? You're looking well."

"I've been busy," she said, stroking her forehead. "This afternoon, an impacted wisdom tooth—"

"—Please," the psychic said, holding up his hand. "No details. Dentistry doesn't inspire me." He frowned. In Southfield, north of Detroit, there were two psychics acknowledged to be accurate; this one, Herbert, was younger. He was just starting out and was in his early thirties, but he had the darkened, somewhat arresting look of a man who has fought and won in a battle with schizophrenia. Under no circumstances did he ever make eye contact.

"So," Dinah said, "what's new."

"The good news first. Buy Michigan Consolidated Edison," the psychic said. "It's shamefully undervalued and it's going to go straight up. There's going to be a merger, a reorganization . . . something, I don't know exactly what. The Amalgamated is going to snatch it up. Okay. Next. Sell that little tool-and-





die company you've been buying over the counter. That's a one-way ticket to nowhere, that company."

"Herbert," she said, "you're confused. My husband bought that. It's in his portfolio, not mine."

"A slight mistake," the psychic said. "How's your daughter? She must be ... what? Three?"

"Four. She's fine. She's in nursery school. Is that why you called?"

"No."

"Why did you?"

"Yesterday morning I got a terrible feeling about you. What are you doing?"

"What do you mean, what am I doing?"

"It's a simple question." He blew his nose. "Comprehensible. What are you doing?"

"I'm doing," she said, "what I always do. I get up, I go to work, I go home."

"Oh no," the psychic said, putting his handkerchief away. "That's not the story. That's not the black spot on the horizon. We have another story here. That's definite. Are you planning a trip?"

"Not until next summer."

"You and Jake, are you in the market for a new house?"

"No."

"It's a black spot, Dinah. There it is, blinking, at the horizon, a blinking black spot. I just wish I could be more specific. I don't get messages like this every day. Your daughter ... Sarah?"

"Sally," she corrected him.

"Sally." He sneezed. "Is she all right?"

"Fine. Just as I told you. Fine."

"Dinah, I don't want to be indelicate. You and Jake. Are you happy? I don't mean to pry."

"Of course it's prying," she told him. "We're very happy."

"Something's wrong," Herbert said. "Something is wrong with me or with you. It's not that dog of yours, is it? That Weimaraner?"

"Otto."

"Yes, Otto."

"Otto is fine."

"Then I don't know what's the matter with me."

"What did you see?" Dinah asked.

"Calamity," the psychic said. "Not to mince words."

"What kind of calamity," Dinah asked, jarred.

"What kind? The Book of Job kind. I saw your whole life, your house, car, that swimming pool you put in last summer, the career, your child, and the whole future just start to radiate with this ugly black flame from the inside, poof, and then I saw you falling, like at the circus, down from the trapeze. Whoops, and down, and then through the safety net. Through the ground."

Dinah made a sound in her throat.

"Yes," the psychic said, "that's how I feel too. And after all this work, too, these years of dedication. I can't get it more specific yet. I'm not pulling

**"I saw your whole life  
start to radiate  
with this ugly black flame  
from the inside, poof,  
and then I saw  
you falling ..."**

the specifics in on my antenna. I'm not getting that station. Please don't go out to the backyard and start chopping down trees. Don't try to get a pilot's license. Be careful in your work."

"I am careful in my work," Dinah said.

"All this makes me nervous," the psychic said. "I usually have these things in better focus." He got up and scratched at his scalp. Dinah noticed food stains on his corduroy trousers.

"I wish you'd change the pictures on the wall," she said.

"My mother gave me that one," he said, pointing at the babbling brook. "I bought the other one at K-Mart, to match it."

"Well," Jake said at dinner, "what did Herbert say?"

She put down her glass of wine, a 1976 Liberi, School burgundy. "I wasn't going to tell you."

"That bad?"

"Worse. First he said to buy Consolidated Michigan Edison. Then he said, quote, calamity, unquote."

"What kind of calamity? Significant capital losses?"

"That's the catch. It's not the investments he's talking about. This is personal. He started asking me about our marriage, if you can believe me. Him asking me about our relationship was a scene out of a Bergman movie. Grotesque. Anyway, he said he didn't have anything in focus. We're not supposed to do anything risky, he says."

"We should stop going to that guy," Jake said. "He was always north Detroit wacko, but at least we used to make money off of him."

"Don't forget what he told us about Northeastern BankTel."

"I haven't forgotten."

"Up twenty points in five months."

"I remember. We paid for the swimming pool with that tip, I haven't forgotten Lincoln Tri-State Insurance, either."

She raised the crystal wine glass to him.

Dinah was drilling a first upper left bicusped when the nurse came up behind her. "Call Herbert," she whispered. "He says he'll be in all afternoon."

Twenty minutes later Dinah was on the phone. "Well?"

"It's not you," the psychic said. "it must be Jake, your husband."

"What did you see?" Dinah asked.

"Picture this," the psychic said. "There's a field, and a tree, and the shape of this tree is *disgusting*. It's a disgusting tree, Dinah, I don't know how else to describe it, gnarled and burnt but with this awful blue fruit still growing on it, like blistered plums."

"What's this have to do with Jake?"

"It has something to do with Jake."

"What?"

"I don't know yet."

"Herbert," she said, "I think we better stop this. If you can't be specific, I don't think I want your help anymore."

"I don't blame you," he said. "I don't know what's wrong with the signals."

That night, as she was putting her daughter to bed, she smelled the air for gas. In the cold Michigan winter night the wind blew against the side of the house and against the roof, underneath which, bedded between the slats of the attic, the Corning fiberglass insulation held the warmth underneath and the cold above. As her daughter fell asleep, Dinah listened carefully to the rhythms of her child's breath. She checked the room for sharp edges. Then she went downstairs, walked past her husband asleep, mouth open, in the den, where he sat propped in front of the television set, Otto asleep next to him. In the kitchen she checked the burners on the stove. She went back into the den and shut off the VCR. Down by Jake's dangling left hand, on the tile floor, beside the rug, there was a water glass, not broken. Falling asleep, he had dropped it. Dinah went to fetch a few paper towels, and Otto watched her as she cleaned up.

She returned to the kitchen and sat down at the circular breakfast table after checking the house. She folded both hands in front of her, as she listened to the click of the quartz kitchen clock above the sink. Feeling hungry, she opened the refrigerator and picked out a grapefruit from a group of five gathered in the crisper. From a drawer to the left of the sink, she took a four-inch serrated knife. Holding the knife and the grapefruit in her left hand, she opened the cupboard and took out a green glass plate with her right hand. As she took out the plate, the knife slipped from her hand and fell to the floor, where it slid toward the stove. She reached down and picked it up. Against her palm the knife's handle

felt smooth and cold.

She dimmed the light above the breakfast table with the rheostat switch and began to cut into the grapefruit with the serrated knife. Keeping her fingers out of the way, she sliced the grapefruit in half, then began to cut it into sections. She stood up again to get a spoon from the drawer. As she was sliding the drawer open, the doorbell rang.

She thought of Jake in the den, then shrugged her shoulders and went to the foyer. Without looking through the glass panels on either side of the door, she turned the lock. Standing behind the storm door was Gary Slominski, the paperboy, collecting. He wore a grey winter hat, army surplus overcoat, and brown boots. Dinah went to her purse in the front hall, on the first step of the stairs, took out six dollars, and went back to where Gary was standing on the stoop. "Thank you," he said, as she handed the money to him.

She closed the door, locked it, and walked back into the kitchen. She sat down again under the light and absentmindedly began to eat the grapefruit she had already sliced. She heard the furnace going on, blowing heat into the four corners of the house. From the living room came the sound of something striking the picture window, perhaps a bird blown into the glass by the windstorm. She decided to wait to check on it until she had finished eating. Then she heard a similar sound: some object, again, striking the window. At almost the same moment, the phone began to ring. She stood up, dried her hands on a dishtowel, walked over to where it was hanging, and answered it.

"Hello," she said.

"It isn't Jake," the psychic said. "I was wrong about that."

"Herbert, you need a rest. Sun. Sun for your sinuses. I recommend Florida. You're going haywire."

"I know. This is my last call, almost. I've called *everyone* I know. All my clients. I just wanted to tell you it's not Jake."

"Good," Dinah said. "I'm glad to hear that."

"It's everybody," he said and hung up.

Dinah put back the phone on its cradle, looked at the ceiling, then sat down again and finished the grapefruit. She put the yellow rind into a brown paper bag in the garbage can under the sink, and she rinsed the dish and the knife and put them in the yellow plastic dish drainer. Then she walked into the living room and positioned herself in front of the picture window. She looked down at the lawn, lightly covered now with snow. Underneath the window she saw a sparrow with a broken wing pulling itself in half-circles around on the grass. She looked up into the sky, then turned off all the lights on the side table next to the sofa behind her. Then she went back to the window, cupped her hands on both sides of her face, and looked outside to see what was happening. 17



*Beware that curst of beings—a vampire's vampire.*

Illustration by D.W. Miller

# DAYBLOOD

by ROGER ZELAZNY

I crouched in the corner of the collapsed shed behind the ruined church. The dampness soaked through the knees of my jeans, but I knew that my wait was just about ended. Picturesquely, a few tendrils of mist rose from the soaked ground, to be stirred feebly by predawn breezes. How Hollywood of the weather ...

I cast my gaze about the lightening sky, guessing correctly as to the direction of arrival. Within a minute I saw them flapping their way back—a big, dark one and a smaller, pale one. Predictably, they entered the church through the opening where a section of the roof had years before fallen in. I suppressed a yawn as I checked my watch. Fifteen minutes from now they should be settled and dozing as the sun spills morning all over the east. Possibly a little sooner, but give them a bit of leeway. No hurry yet.

I stretched and cracked my knuckles. I'd rather be home in bed. Nights are for sleeping, not for playing nursemaid to a couple of stupid vampires.

Yes, Virginia, there really are vampires. Nothing to get excited about, though. Odds are you'll never meet one. There just aren't that many around. In fact, they're damn near an endangered species—which is entirely understandable, considering the general level of intelligence I've encountered among them.

Take this guy Brodsky as an example. He lives—pardon me, resides—near a town containing several thousand people. He could have visited a different person each night for years without ever repeating himself, leaving his caterers (I understand that's their in-term these days) with little more than a slight sore throat, a touch of temporary anemia and a couple of soon-to-be-forgotten scratches on the neck.

But no. He took a fancy to a local beauty—one Elaine Wilson, ex-majorette. Kept going back for more. Pretty soon she entered the customary coma and underwent the *nosferatu* transformation. All right, I know I said there aren't that many of them around—and personally I do feel that the world could use a few more vampires. But it's not a population-pressure thing with Brodsky, just stupidity and greed. No real finesse, no planning. While I applaud the creation of another member of the undead, I am sufficiently appalled by the carelessness of his methods to consider serious action. He left a trail that just about anyone could trace here; he also managed to display so many of the traditional signs and to leave such a multitude of clues that even in these modern times a reasonable person could become convinced of what was going on.

Poor old Brodsky—still living in the Middle Ages and behaving just as he did in the days of their population boom. It apparently never occurred to him to consider the mathematics of that sort of thing. He drains a few people he becomes particularly attracted to and they become *nosferatu*. If they feel the same way and behave the same way, they go out and recruit a few more of their caterers. And so on. It's like a chain letter. After a time, everyone would be *nosferatu* and there wouldn't be any caterers left. Then what? Fortunately, nature has ways of dealing with population explosions, even at

this level. Still, a sudden rash of recruits in this mass-media age could really mess up the underground ecosystem.

So much for philosophy. Time to get inside and beat the crowd.

I picked up my plastic bag and worked my way out of the shed, cursing softly when I bumped against a post and brought a shower down over me. I made my way through the field then and up to the side door of the old building. It was secured by a rusty padlock which I snapped and threw into the distant cemetery.

Inside, I perched myself on the sagging railing of the choir section and opened my bag. I withdrew my sketchbook and the pencil I'd brought along. Light leaked in through the broken window to the rear. What it fell upon was mostly trash. Not a particularly inspiring scene. Whatever ... I began sketching it. It's always good to have a hobby that can serve as an excuse for odd actions, as an ice-breaker ...

Ten minutes, I guessed. At most.

Six minutes later, I heard their voices. They weren't particularly noisy, but I have exceptionally acute hearing. There were three of them, as I'd guessed there would be.

They entered through the side door also, slinking, jumpy—looking all about and seeing nothing. At first they didn't even notice me creating art where childish voices had filled Sunday mornings with off-key praise in years gone by.

There was old Dr. Morgan, several wooden stakes protruding from his black bag (I'll bet there was a hammer in there, too—I guess the Hippocratic Oath doesn't extend to the undead—*primum, non nocere*, etc.); and Father O'Brien, clutching his Bible like a shield, crucifix in his other hand; and young Ben Kelman (Elaine's fiancé), with a shovel over his shoulder and a bag from which I suspected the sudden odor of garlic to have its origin.

I cleared my throat and all three of them stopped, turned, bumped into each other.

"Hi, Doc," I said. "Hi, Father. Ben ..."

"Wayne!" Doc said. "What are you doing here?"

"Sketching," I said. "I'm into old buildings these days."

"The hell you are!" Ben said. "Excuse me, Father ... You're just after a story for your damned newspaper!"

I shook my head.

"Really I'm not."

"Well, Gus'd never let you print anything about this and you know it."

"Honest," I said. "I'm not here for a story. But I know why you're here, and you're right—even if I wrote it up it would never appear. You really believe in vampires?"

Doc fixed me with a steady gaze.

"Not until recently," he said. "But son, if you'd

seen what we've seen, you'd believe."

I nodded my head and closed my sketchpad.

"All right," I replied, "I'll tell you. I'm here because I'm curious. I wanted to see it for myself, but I don't want to go down there alone. Take me with you."

They exchanged glances.

"I don't know ..." Ben said.

"It won't be anything for the squeamish," Doc told me.

Father O'Brien just nodded.

"I don't know about having anyone else in on this," Ben added.

"How many more know about it?" I asked.

"It's just us, really," Ben explained. "We're the only ones who actually saw him in action."

"A good newspaperman knows when to keep his mouth shut," I said, "but he's also a very curious creature. Let me come along."

Ben shrugged and Doc nodded. After a moment Father O'Brien nodded too.

I replaced my pad and pencil in the bag and got down from the railing.

I followed them across the church, out into a short hallway and up to an open, sagging door. Doc flicked on a flashlight and played it upon a rickety flight of stairs leading down into darkness. Slowly then, he began to descend. Father O'Brien followed him. The stairs groaned and seemed to move. Ben and I waited till they had reached the bottom. Then Ben stuffed his bag of pungent groceries inside his jacket and withdrew a flashlight from his pocket. He turned it on and stepped down. I was right behind him.

I halted when we reached the foot of the stair. In the beams from their lights I beheld the two caskets set up on sawhorses, also the thing on the wall above the larger one.

"Father, what is that?" I pointed.

Someone obligingly played a beam of light upon it.

"It looks like a sprig of mistletoe tied to the figure of a little stone deer," he said.

"Probably has something to do with black magic," I offered.

He crossed himself, went over to it and removed it.

"Probably so," he said, crushing the mistletoe and throwing it across the room, shattering the figure on the floor and kicking the pieces away.

I smiled, I moved forward then.

"Let's get the things open and have a look," Doc said.

I lent them a hand.

When the caskets were open I ignored the comments about paleness, preservation, and bloody mouths. Brodsky looked the same as he always did—dark hair, heavy dark eyebrows, sagging jowls, a bit of a paunch. The girl was lovely, though. Taller than I'd thought, however, with a very faint pulsa-

tion at the throat and an almost bluish cast to her skin.

Father O'Brien opened his Bible and began reading, holding the flashlight above it with a trembling hand. Doc placed his bag upon the floor and fumbled about inside it.

Ben turned away, tears in his eyes. I reached out then and broke his neck quietly while the others were occupied. I lowered him to the floor and stepped up beside Doc.

"What—?" he began, and that was his last word.

Father O'Brien stopped reading. He stared at me across his Bible.

"You work for *them*?" he said hoarsely, darting a glance at the caskets.

"Hardly," I said, "but I need them. They're my life's blood."

"I don't understand ..."

"Everything is prey to something else, and we do what we must. That's ecology. Sorry, Father."

I used Ben's shovel to bury the three of them beneath an earthen section of the floor toward the rear—garlic, stakes, and all. Then I closed the caskets and carried them up the stairs.

I checked around as I hiked across a field and back up the road after the pickup truck. It was still relatively early and there was no one about.

I loaded them both in back and covered them with a tarp. It was a thirty-mile drive to another ruined church I knew of.

Later, when I had installed them safely in their new quarters, I penned a note and placed it in Brodsky's hand:

Dear B,

*Let this be a lesson to you. You are going to have to stop acting like Bela Lugosi. You lack his class. You are lucky to be waking up at all this night. In the future be more circumspect in your activities or I may retire you myself. After all, I'm not here to serve you.*

Yours truly,

W

*P.S. The mistletoe and the statue of Cernunnos don't work anymore. Why did you suddenly get superstitious?*

I glanced at my watch as I left the place. It was eleven fifteen. I stopped at a 7-11 a little later and used their outside phone.

"Hi, Kiela," I said when I heard her voice. "It's me."

"Werdeth," she said. "It's been a while."

"I know. I've been busy."

"With what?"

"Do you know where the old Church of the Apostles out off Route 6 is?"

"Of course. It's on my backup list, too."

"Meet me there at twelve thirty and I'll tell you about it over lunch." 



# The Screening

by Michael Blaine

*It's the most terrifying vision in the world.  
And Weltbounder has filmed it . . . just for you!*

**T**here better be some humpy blondes in there, or this'll be the next *Heaven's Gate*," Fitzgibbon had told Weltbounder. He had been against hiring the German director from the beginning, and now his worst fears were being realized. Weltbounder had gone way over budget—and no one knew what he had produced.

The director chewed a twenty-five-cent Italian cigar and tugged at his worker's cap. "Ya. Plenty humpy blondes. We skin them like pigs. Did you see my last film, Mr. Fitzgibbon?"

Fitzgibbon had slept through most of *The Star-crossed Night of the Collision of the Thirteen Moons*, Weltbounder's most critically acclaimed opus to date. "Oh, that one? Terrific stuff, Werner." All he remembered was footage of a Deitrich type performing a circumcision on a man dressed as the Pope. "The thing is, we want suspense here. Action. Plot. Blood isn't enough."

Weltbounder had nodded out, but at the mention of blood he revived and took out a package of well-thumbed snapshots. "The insides of some young German boys. Girls too. Their parents agreed because I tell them it is for art's sake."

Fitzgibbon was exasperated. The whole project wasn't his idea anyway. That asshole Hertzman, with his arty pretensions, had gotten Omniversal entangled in the mess. The clever sonofabitch had produced some good-looking demographics, too.

"We'll get the whole foreign-film crowd, we'll get the college audience—and we'll even get the teens. Werner will give us something hot. Trust me, Bill. The critics cream over this guy."

The only thing Fitzgibbon liked so far were the rumors Weltbounder's press agent had started. He had placed, in certain tabloids in Cologne, the notion that several people had died viewing Weltbounder's rushes. *Der Stern* picked up the story, which had probably been invented to cover the ODs that regularly took place on Weltbounder's sets, and from *Der Stern* it had gotten into *Newsweek*.

Weltbounder himself was good copy. He hinted that Idi Amin had agreed to do a cameo. He made extravagant remarks about filming his own suicide. He challenged Polanski to a twenty-four-hour pederasty tournament. It was all there—the manic nights, the attacks of ennui at the Berlin wall, all chronicled by the admiring critics, Cerise and Candy.

But the movie remained elusive. Weltbounder missed deadline after deadline. They had hoped to open in the summer against the usual spate of tits-and-ass comedies, but the director reported that he was making some "minor script adjustments."

Fitzgibbon's sources in the crew reported there didn't seem to be any script. Some days Weltbounder just let the cameras roll, filming hour after hour of blank streets. Some days he wouldn't get out

of bed until his doctor came and found a fresh vein for him. For a week he did nothing but paint some pubescent boys blue and cavort with them in rathskellers.

Somehow, though, the film had been completed. A year late, but still in time for the latest summer season. Fitzgibbon waited for the screening with dread. What he had envisioned was a classy slasher movie with a European touch. What he feared was the ire of Big Sid, the accountant who controlled Omniversal without ever reviewing a single clip. If Weltbounder bombed out, Big Sid would stuff numbers down his throat, reams and reams of numbers.

"Did he use BMWs in the car chases? And some Porsches? They have fantastic resale value," he asked Hertzman, nervously tapping his bottle of digestion pills. His doctors couldn't agree on which of his organs was in greater disrepair.

Hertzman, who was producing on his first truly grand budget, said, "It's a great concept, Fitz, but Werner is afraid of cars. There aren't any cars in this, as far as I know."

"No car chases?" Fitzgibbon was distraught. "Right away you lose thirty percent of your audience. They come to see the cars blow up, you prick. Haven't you learned that yet?"

"Don't worry, he's got something up his sleeve." But Hertzman was worried, too. He knew that Weltbounder hadn't even allowed parked cars to appear in his frames.

Fitzgibbon grabbed a handful of pills and swallowed them without water. "Did you ever feel your liver, Hertzman? No, of course not. You've still got one. But it's those things inside of you that you can't see."

Hertzman eyed his boss anxiously. When livers became the subject of discussion, he knew he had entered the danger zone.

"If you blow this thing," Fitzgibbon said, opening and closing his hairy hand, "you'll feel a lot of things. Now get out of here."

Hertzman was shaken, but perversely proud of the chance he had taken. The opportunity to work with Weltbounder was the dream of a lifetime. Back at UCLA, in the days of Mocus and Pallberg, Hertzman had been a star student, too. In fact, his film, a thriller about French ants, had come in second the year Mocus had won Best Picture.

While he shrewdly kept a tight lid on his encyclopedic knowledge of the cinema in the company of savages like Fitzgibbon, when he was alone he liked to whisper phrases like *mise-en-scène* over and over to himself. He hoped to direct someday, when he had enough money to guarantee himself complete aesthetic freedom, and to that end he had produced three snuff flicks in an alley off Pitt Street in New York and a trilogy of splatter movies. None of these projects bore his real name, but the profits brought

him respectability—and his job working with Fitzgibbon at Omniversal.

Up to the moment of the screening, Hertzman didn't have an inkling of what Weltbounder had done. In fact, the director had acted the fabled monster to the hilt. After the early stages of production he had barred Hertzman from the set, refusing to let him look at any rough footage, and when he did deign to give the producer an audience, he spent his time whistling off-key renditions of "Minnie the Moocher."

Hertzman's sources on the set had become more and more distraught as the rough cut was prepared. Stiles, a devoted factotum, had had a stroke when he secretly viewed some clips on a Movieola. In deep aphasia, he was able to say only a single phrase, "the black shoe," which his wife refused to comment on.

Willie Lee Willie, a starlet Hertzman had insisted be added to the cast, had had a nervous breakdown which she attributed to Weltbounder's mistreatment. "He took pictures of me," was all she would tell Hertzman.

Mystified, Hertzman had asked, "Isn't that what he's supposed to do?"

"Disgusting things," she spat.

Since that, too, was what Weltbounder had been hired to do, Hertzman chalked her condition up to the German's somewhat unusual casting couch. The death of a grip, due to an aneurism, and that of a makeup man with a history of coronary trouble didn't seem to be related, except for the fact that they'd expired during the same pre-screening.

"Too much with the saturated fats," Weltbounder had explained calmly, like a veteran cardiologist.

A set designer had recently reported, however, that the whole project was a mixture of slapstick and horror. "An act of pure genius. Camp supreme."

The director also had the annoying habit of showing up in town when he was supposed to be on location.

In a moment he relished, Hertzman had told him, "We're supposed to spy on *you*, Werner, not vice versa."

Ignoring the producer's acid thrust, Weltbounder had grinned and showed his stubby brown teeth. "I come to tell you the title, Mr. Hertzman. *Rasho-money*. I am very happy with. It is an advance on the Japanese work."

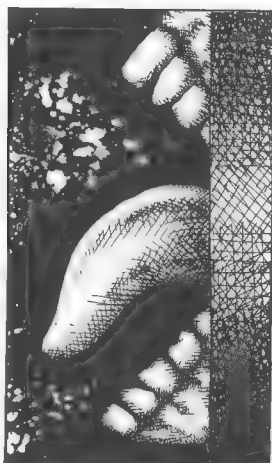
"No, absolutely not. The contract says we have final approval of the title. We're looking for one like that classic, *I Dismember Mama*. Remember that?"

"Yah. Cute, but this is, how you say? Advanced. Subliminal stuff."

It had been a stormy session, but the producer had given no ground.

Before he pushed open the silver doors to the screening room, Hertzman downed an entire bottle of Brioschi. His whole career was riding on the proj-

**"We have final approval of the title. We're looking for one like that classic, 'I Dismember Mama.'"**



ect. With a little more money he could escape the day-to-day grind he hated so intensely. Yes, he had the house in Topanga Canyon; yes, his wife was a former starlet and his two children were cute enough to perform in Pampers commercials. But he couldn't stand it much longer. He wanted to create before it was too late. He wanted to write scripts that would make the whole world howl with the shock of recognition. He wanted to examine the underbelly of existence. He wanted to make movies where the characters did things for no reason at all. He wanted to sleep late and throw tantrums. Anything but this incessant treadmill on the money machine.

Hertzman's father had been a bookkeeper, a man who worked through his vacations in order to collect double pay, a man who had always shown up on time for supper. Even now, when he thought of that life, the stained fedoras, the suits in mothballs, he began tearing at his tie as if he were suffocating.

By choosing a film career, he had hoped to escape the coma of such an existence, yet he worked eighteen-hour days and thought of nothing but budgets and production costs. Only an audacious move could free him. Weltbounder had seemed the perfect vehicle. Now he didn't know.

Klice saw Hertzman hunched in his seat two rows in front of the screen and ran his thumb along his hairless chin. He was certain this affair with Weltbounder would ruin his colleague, leaving the job of Assistant Executive producer Klice's for the taking. Although he admired Hertzman's early work—the snuff movies were models of their genre—he sensed a certain softness at the man's core, a sentimentality that would drive him to some self-destructive act.

Klice was sure Fitzgibbon looked on him with favor because he had pioneered the concept of "hunk chopping" for Omniversal. In his biggest hit, *Thanatos Baby*, Klice had whipped his actresses into

a murderous fury by showing clips from Charles Bronson movies and asking them, "When did a woman ever get to have this much fun?"

One night, high on a mixture of booze and animal tranquilizers, he had revealed his secret vision to Hertzman. "Remember when that Pacino picture opened in New York last year, where he plays the Cuban coke dealer? I read in the papers that some guy got so hot watching all the stabbing that he pulled out his switchblade and started sticking everybody in his row. Went right through the loge seats before they caught him."

Hertzman said he hadn't caught that item. He tried to look at Klice directly, but his distaste forced him to turn away. He always imagined the hairless man, his skin smooth as a frankfurter, pasting a wig to his bare skull.

Klice went on. "That's my fantasy. One of my chop 'em ups opens in Lubbock, say, and some fried bitch goes wild in the audience, really hacks off a few peckers."

Hertzman's curved spine almost caved in on itself, his body freezing in distaste.

On a five-hundred-thousand-dollar budget, *Thanatos Baby* had grossed twenty million. Klice hoped to keep making the same film forever, but with bigger budgets and bigger stars. Not simply for the money, although he had the greatest reverence for currency, but for his access to unlimited numbers of beautiful, hungry young women.

Klice, who often lost interest in an affair before the morning after, knew it was his power that allowed him to play the Don Juan. He knew his hairless lip was unpleasantly thin; he knew his personality was too hopelessly sardonic to inspire love. But if he became a top producer—or, better still, started his own company... He could do anything, have anyone.

"You've got your publicity working overtime Hertzzy," he said softly, sliding in behind the producer. "It's like the junk business. Some guy croaks on a brand, it starts a run. They figure the stuff was too strong for the other asshole. Weltbounder's boy start those rumors?"

Hertzman jerked, startled. He hated to be touched, least of all by Klice. "Oh, yeah. Weltbounder's flack is a real pro. A special person." He tried to sound jocular, but his voice had leaped up an octave.

**F**itzgibbon arrived just as the credits started to crawl. A couple of snaky blondes were playing on a green meadow, their voices amplified over an ominous score. Nice sense of menace. He was surprised. A figure flitted behind a clump of trees. The girls laughed with strained good humor, sensing they were going to get it good. It was almost classical. Maybe Weltbounder would work out after all.

"Nice to see you Marty," he said to Klice.



He was glad Klice was there. Hertzman's film school crapola annoyed him no end. Klice was the perfect antidote. And he had come up the same way Fitzgibbon had, straight from the cutting room. Fitzgibbon felt almost avuncular toward Klice.

Hertzman saw a street, not unlike the one he lived on, a mother and her children waiting in the doorway. When the woman turned, he realized, to his shock, that it was his wife. How the hell had Weltbounder done it? No wonder he had been so secretive. Margo had always wanted to go back to work, and there she was, looking stunning, vulnerable. When had that bastard shot this stuff? He looked over his shoulder nervously, wondering whether Fitzgibbon recognized her.

Klice thought the slow-motion hat-pin sequence was really rather brilliant. He had never seen a killing quite like it, the long pin darting through the eye of the well-muscled lifeguard, only to be withdrawn like a shrimp fork, dripping white fluid. The cross-cutting was sharp and the shots from below the actor's leaking eye-socket were nothing short of sensational.

Then he froze. A room drenched in flickering neon disclosed a woman he thought he recognized, some actress he once had had a thing with, Sandy Whatsername. From San Luis Obispo. He remembered her nipples, like the tips of upcurled tongues, and her swan's neck. As the camera panned the room he saw himself, on his stomach, the girl consoling him.

His face wasn't visible, thank God, but what kind of joke was Weltbounder pulling?

"Sometimes you can try too hard, baby. Let's watch some tv. There's a good George Peppard movie on," she cooed sympathetically.

He heard himself gagging in the movie—and in his seat. He remembered the motel now, out on the edge of The Strip. The furry waterbed with built-in speakers. The ashtrays stamped with Marilyn Monroe's face. The flaking gilt that fell from the suspended mirror.

Klice could feel his tongue diving into the back of his throat, but he affected a casual air. "You think it's working, Fitz?"

"Nice stuff," Fitzgibbon replied. "Slick as hell."

Maybe Fitzgibbon wouldn't notice. Klice began praying, for the first time since junior high school.

Fitzgibbon let out a notch on his belt and relaxed. He had to admit the way the blonde's skull was shattered, shards of flesh and bone spinning out at the viewer like shrapnel from a fragmentation bomb—well, it was a bit too much for him, but it was artfully done, and that's what the audiences went for nowadays. He liked the sympathy Weltbounder had built in before she was mangled. He liked the face of her bereaved husband, the funeral in the rain. Pretty stuff. Well paced.

A cut to an interior jarred him, though. For a moment he refused to believe it. Weltbounder had

shot a scene in Fitzgibbon's own office. At first he couldn't see anyone, but the voice was unmistakable. Big Sid's.

"Gibby, I like clean numbers, you now that. These numbers, they smell like cheese. Soft. They fall apart in your hands. Look at this graph. And this chart. We're missing Group Two, the ones that go and go and go."

"This wasn't my idea, Sid, Hertzman swore to me—"

"You're the honcho, Pancho."

Fitzgibbon lit a cigarette and glanced quickly at his underlings. Their faces appeared benign in the wash of projection light, betraying nothing. Anxiously he tapped his stomach where knots and bowties of acid were forming.

Hertzman was afraid to look over his shoulder. There was no way around it. He had blown it. The camera fixed on a half-eaten Hostess Snowball for a full three minutes. It wandered along the countertop, circled a corkscrew, went out of focus, then climbed the wall before an axelike cut suddenly showed the empty drive. He saw himself get out of his Alfa and walk sullenly into the kitchen.

The soundtrack sounded like a lawn mower.

Cut to dinner. Five full minutes of cold pasta. A conversation about his son's hookworm. The stock was so grainy it looked like Super-eight blown up to thirty-five. Where had Weltbounder been? In the bushes? In the closets? Under the table? How had he done this?

Nothing was happening. Margo fixed him a tequila sunrise. She took a belt of Irish Mist. The kids played on the rug. The television buzzed in the background. No one talked. He asked Margo about the cyst. She said the biopsy was negative. They drank to that. She said her mother was coming. He said that was fine. They could put her in the spare bedroom. She said she'd buy new sheets.

Nothing happened for another three minutes.

He suddenly recalled the words of a film professor at UCLA. "Real time" is torture. If you really hate your audience, that's what you put 'em through."

Another cut. The screen went black for a moment. He wondered what sort of blunt instrument Weltbounder had used to splice with. As the haze cleared he saw himself coming up the same drive again, only he looked ten years older. He hadn't aged well. His throat shook. Turkey wattles. Margo met him at the door. She looked good, but her skin was too tight. Plastic surgery, he figured. She fixed him a tequila sunrise. Then she downed a belt of Irish Mist.

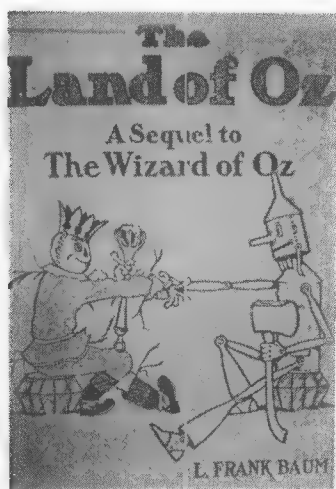
Hertzman couldn't breathe. He tried to loosen his tie, but it wouldn't give, a silken noose in his hands. A tingling sensation ran down his arm just before his heart blew, a hot nova in the cage of his chest.

(continued on page 71)



Above: Production designer Norman Reynolds's sketch for the Emerald City.

Below: The 1904 Oz sequel on which, in part, the film is based.



# OZ

## Revisited

*Disney's long awaited sequel to The Wizard of Oz will open this June – but the Yellow Brick Road has been a rocky one.*

by JAMES VERNIERE

As TZ readers know, I have been on many film sets in the past three years, sometimes welcome, sometimes not so. In the case of my visit to the set of *Oz*, Disney's twenty-five-million-dollar sequel to *The Wizard of Oz*, I was not so welcome. My intention had been to get the story behind the making of this trouble-plagued film, while simultaneously covering the less controversial elements (the makeup, effects, costumes, et cetera). What I discovered when I reached Elstree Studios outside London, however, was that I was perceived as a Wicked Witch of journalism, out to wreak havoc on the film and its director. The result was far from a pleasant experience; but, in spite of that, I believe that *Oz* director Walter Murch, given what I know about his

work and his *Oz* script, may just surprise everyone (including nervous Disney execs) and turn his version of life in the Emerald City into (you should pardon the expression) a gem.

When Disney first announced plans to make a film called *Return to Oz* (the title has been reduced because of a copyright problem), my first reaction was to wonder how they could dare to tamper with a classic. In fact, though, there have been many film adaptations of L. Frank Baum's *Oz* tales, including one written and produced by Baum himself—released in 1910 by Selig Pictures as a one-reeler. Baum even formed his own studio—The *Oz* Film Manufacturing Company—in 1914 to adapt his sequels to *The Wizard of Oz*, and he subsequently shot three films: *The Patchwork Girl of Oz*, *The Magic*

*Cloak of Oz*, and *His Majesty, The Scarecrow of Oz*. A silent version of *The Wizard of Oz* was even made in 1924 with a pre-Laurel and Hardy Oliver Hardy as the Tin Man, and there was also an animated *Oz* film in color produced in 1933. It wasn't until the 1939 MGM film musical that *Oz* and Dorothy were deified by the version starring Judy Garland and directed by Victor Fleming.

Walt Disney's interest in making his own film version of Baum's tales goes back to 1937, when he first inquired about the copyright, but it wasn't until 1954 that he actually purchased the rights to eleven books, including *The Marvelous Land of Oz* and *Ozma of Oz* (the two primary sources for the *Oz* script). In fact, in 1957 Disney himself announced the imminent production of a live-action



Walt Disney, who bought the rights to the later books in Baum's series, planned to use the Mousketeers in an Oz film.

musical called *The Rainbow Road to Oz*. But that film was never made, and Walt Disney did not live to see his studio produce any Oz films.

There were, however, several animated and live-action Oz films for both television and the big screen, including one made with Shirley Temple called *The Land of Oz*, a sixty-minute cartoon called *Return to Oz* (hence the copyright problem), and an animated feature called *Journey Back to Oz*. Most recently, of course, Sidney Lumet directed the unsuccessful film adaptation of the Broadway musical *The Wiz*.

The new Disney film, which the studio describes as "a live-action fantasy adventure," started life three years ago when editor Walter Murch (*Apocalypse Now*, *The Conversation*, *Julia*) proposed the idea to Walt Disney Productions. Pre-production began in early 1983 with Gary Kurtz (*Star Wars*, *The Dark Crystal*) as producer. Last year, however, a series of power shifts among Disney executives nearly put the project on hold. In fact, by the time I arrived at Borehamwood it had already been announced in the press that Murch had almost been fired but had been saved in part due to the intervention of his friends and colleagues, most notably George Lucas and Francis Coppola.

The unit publicist had no problem setting up an interview for me with the newly-appointed producer of Oz, Paul Maslansky (Kurtz had been bumped to executive producer), but he seemed a bit nervous about my desire to question Murch. And he made it clear that I could not speak to ten-year-old Fairuza Balk, the little Canadian girl hired to follow in Judy Garland's ruby-slippered footsteps. (I learned later that the publicist had a right to worry about Balk. Apparently a visiting writer from *People* had ensconced herself in Balk's car and refused to budge until the kid talked.)

Maslansky, who has produced twenty-five films, including *The Red*

*Tent*, *The Blue Bird*, and the recent hit, *Police Academy*, is an amiable man who seemed anxious to tell me the whole story. According to him, Oz is the result of efforts made by Tom Wilhite, Disney's past vice president, to reestablish the studio's image after the failure of its science fiction film *The Black Hole* (1979).

When Walter Murch offered to direct "a sequel to *The Wizard of Oz*," Wilhite was intrigued. He was also delighted to learn that Disney already had the rights to go ahead with such a project. So Murch, together with coscreenwriter Gill Dennis, went to work on a script in which Dorothy would return to Oz to meet new friends—a talking hen, a mechanical soldier named Tik Tok, a boy with a pumpkin head—and face new enemies: an evil witch named Mombi (Jean Marsh) and a Nome King (Nicol Williamson).

The script, which I was allowed to read, is a charming and often frightening modern fairy tale that begins where *The Wizard of Oz* left off. Dorothy is safely back in Kansas but plagued by dreams and memories of her journey *Over the Rainbow*. In an effort to "cure" Dorothy, her Aunt Em (played by *Carrie's* mother, Piper Laurie) brings her to Dr. Worley (Nicol Williamson) who has invented a new form of treatment for mental disorders: electricity. Yes, my pretties (whoops!), Dorothy is almost literally shocked back to the Yellow Brick Road. Once there, she encounters not only her old and new friends (including the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and the Cowardly Lion) but also evil creatures who are surreal reflections of the people she met in Worley's clinic.

Everyone has always been pleased with the script. The problem was the budget. Maslansky joined the project under orders to "put some restraints" on it, which he did. He cut the original

script down and got rid of several locations (the only exception is Salisbury Plain, which doubles for Kansas). The result was a savings of five million dollars. "No one was fired," says Maslansky.

But Maslansky's presence didn't ameliorate the tensions between director Murch and cinematographer, Freddie Francis, (*The Elephant Man*, *Dune*), and on March 6 Francis resigned, citing "creative differences." He had already shot seven weeks of film, virtually all of the Kansas sequences. "Freddie's work is staying in the film," says Maslansky. "I don't know whether he'll get a credit, though."

Francis stayed on for three weeks after resigning to give Maslansky time to find a replacement, David Watkin (*Chariots of Fire*, *Yentl*). But still there was unrest. A first assistant director was "released" on March 24. "It was a wild week," says Maslansky.

But it got wilder. By March 26 Murch was, according to Maslansky, exhausted. "We were averaging a loss of a day a week, which meant a potential of four weeks behind by the end. At \$60,000 per day that's a monumental average, and it just wasn't clicking all the time. Walter had spent most of his career in an editing room, where the routine is confined and ritualistic. All of a sudden he's directing a big picture. Plus he's in a foreign country."

On the afternoon of the 26th, Maslansky was called down to the set where Murch was filming a sequence in what is called the Cabinet Room, a room full of boxes with human heads in them. "He told me that he couldn't focus," says Maslansky. Steve Lanning, who was acting as temporary first assistant, took over. The camera operator chose the set-ups. "He looked rough," adds Maslansky.

It was the now-replaced Disney president Richard Berger, then on the set, who decided to relieve Murch of his position, a move which took effect the following day, March 27, 1984, thirty-seven days into Oz.

Within twelve hours, George Lucas, who had been in Japan on the set of Paul Schrader's *Mishima*, called and offered to come to the set to help Murch. At the time Berger and Maslansky had already discussed both Richard Lester (*Superman II* and *III*) and Richard Fleischer (*Conan II*) as possible replacements. They decided



instead to give Murch a few days' rest and to see what Lucas could do to help out.

Lucas arrived on Tuesday, April 3, and began walking through something called the Tower Room set with Murch. On Wednesday shooting resumed with Murch at the helm and Lucas consulting. That same day, Francis Coppola arrived unannounced at Elstree, offering to help "his old friend, Walter." He was sent to join Murch and Lucas. By 11 a.m. there had already been six set-ups. "They shot with a vengeance," says Maslansky. Lucas left on the 9th, Coppola on the 10th. They both offered to return.

As stormy as all this sounds, work on the film was progressing smoothly during my visit. In the Ornament Room, one of Norman Reynold's (*Star Wars*, *Raiders*) sets, the second unit was filming bits of the *Oz* climax. Actor Justin Case, who plays the Scarecrow, together with Jack Pumpkinhead, an "animatronic" creation of Lyle Conway (*The Dark Crystal*), dodged styrofoam debris in a scene depicting the wrath of the villainous Nome King. Watching stood Will Vinton, the creator of the award-winning short *Closed Mondays* (1975) and the pioneer of a process dubbed "clay animation" or "claymation," is a process of animating clay through stop motion to achieve the effect of live action. Vinton's work for *Oz*, which will be accomplished in post-production, is the film's most significant technological innovation. An architect by training, Vinton is the man behind the Mount Rushmore promo for Bette Midler's "Divine Madness" tour. For *Oz* he was to supervise all the sequences involving the Nome King and his Nome minions, who are creatures of living rock. Vinton would bring rocks, cliffs, even mountains to life.

Working in concert with Vinton was Robin Grantham (*An American Werewolf in London*), an art teacher turned makeup man, who was responsible for the Nome King in his semihuman (but still rocklike) form. Grantham's workshop was a ghoulish place: a chart of *Grays Anatomy* hung on the wall and a table was covered in human parts: a hand, a nose, a pile of faces—all, of course, in latex. His greatest challenge, he explained, would be to match the Nome King makeup worn by actor

(continued on page 71)



Above: Director Walter Murch sets the scene with Dorothy (Fairuza Balk) and a creature called "the Gump."

Nicol Williamson—"the Nome King" in *Oz*—also plays a menacing Kansas doctor.











1. Dorothy, back in Kansas at the start of the film, finds that no one believes her stories about Oz.
2. Dorothy rediscovers her old pal the Tin Man (played, inside, by a 4'2" Kenyan named Deep Roy).
3. Dorothy, her talking hen Billina, and Tik Tok cautiously approach Mombi's throne.
4. Princess Mombi, wearing one of her collection of thirty interchangeable heads.
5. The film's finale, a glittering Ozian celebration.





And coming soon – behemoths, monsters, and mutants . . .

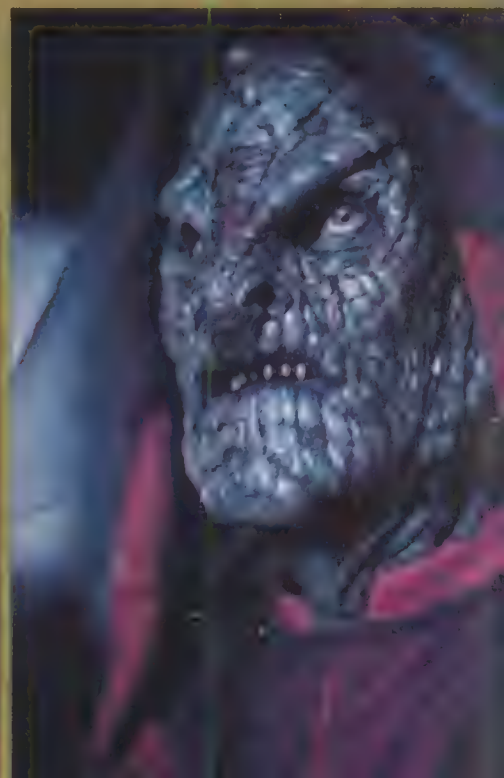


© 1985 Walt Disney Productions



In *Baby*, William Katt and Sean Young play a childless young couple (he's a sportswriter, she's a paleontologist) who become the adopted parents of a baby brontosaurus they've discovered in the African jungle.

*Radioactive Dreams* begins fifteen years after The Bomb, when two teenaged Californians (played by John Stockwell and Michael Dudikoff) emerge from their fallout shelter to roam a postnuclear world full of mutant surfers, disco mutants, hippie cannibals, lizard men (Don Murray, right) and gigantic cancerous rats (below).



# Algernon Blackwood: The Ghostly Tale's Great Visionary

*As he conjured up 'The Willows' and other classics of the supernatural, the master storyteller felt exactly what his readers feel today: "a delicious shudder."*

**Mike Ashley reports:**

You know instinctively when you are witnessing a Presence. And as I sat deathly silent that evening in 1949, watching Algernon Blackwood tell his Saturday Night Story to the thousands watching on British television, I knew. Blackwood held everyone in the studio spellbound, even the producer, Stephen McCormack, who had seen so many of these broadcasts. One of the crew had told me beforehand that the stories were never rehearsed. Blackwood merely gave a rough outline of what he intended to relate, but the whole story invariably came over word perfect, polished from years of experience, and always ending precisely on time.

At last the broadcast was over. Blackwood's final lines had been delivered as the producer experimented with a new special effect, fading Blackwood's face from the screen and leaving just an incorporeal voice to speak the last words. The effect upon the British viewers had been electric—but then, that was only to be expected from a man who, at eighty, was awarded the Television Society's Medal for Outstanding Artistic Achievement.

Blackwood unfolded his six-foot-three frame from the leather chair and, with a slight stoop, made his way toward me, a smile on his tanned, weatherbeaten face, his eyes sparkling with inner contentment. Those eyes, so hypnotic and so friendly, seemed to penetrate to one's very soul, and his voice, as he spoke, was rich and refined, yet welcoming: "You are the young gentleman who wishes to interview me, I believe."

Thus I was introduced to Algernon Henry Blackwood, one of the greatest living writers of supernatural fiction, regarded by Dennis Wheatley as "the finest teller of stories about the occult in his generation,"

and by H.P. Lovecraft as "the one absolute and unquestioned master of weird atmosphere"; author of such noted classics of the genre as "The Willows," "The Wendigo," and "Ancient Sorceries." Together we went to Frascati's, one of his favorite restaurants in Piccadilly, where, after a light meal, we settled back with our drinks—Blackwood with his one true nectar, fernet branca—and looked back over his long life.

**TZ:** You look so relaxed telling stories on television; you seem to have taken to it like a fish to water. Yet here you are, now eighty, having grown up in a world of gas lamps and horse-drawn coaches. How have you made the transition?

**Blackwood:** I never think of myself telling stories on television. I'm talking to every person as an individual, and that is no different than when I tell anyone stories, or as I am talking to you now. But then, I always found storytelling natural. I'm not a writer; I'm certainly not a novelist. I'm a storyteller. It seems I belong instinctively to that oldest of all fraternities, the most ancient of all arts—if you like to call it such—of storytelling. I had, it seemed, a flair. I always enjoyed listening to, and telling, a story. Yet I never guessed this gift—a minor one, I think—lay in me.

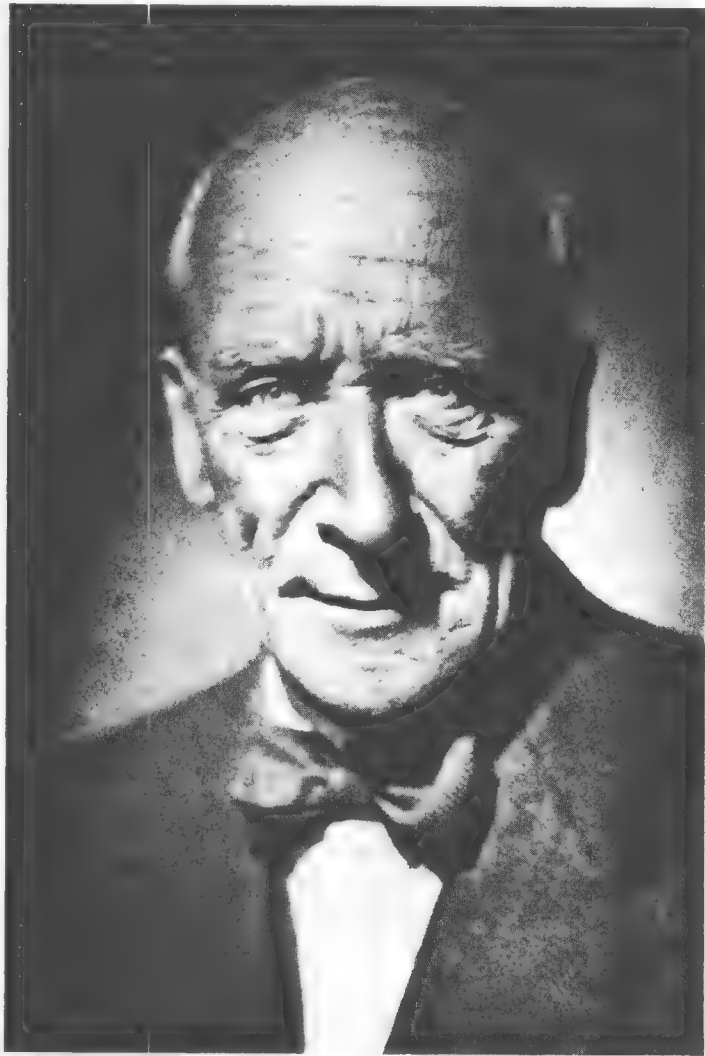
**TZ:** You in fact participated in the BBC's first broadcast, didn't you, back in 1936?

**Blackwood:** That's right. It was considered so great an honor that none of us was paid, other than for expenses, but it was well worth it as a new experience, and thrilled me. We all went out to Alexandra Park in a private BBC bus, each of us performing

for three minutes. The light being quite different to cinema lighting, our make-up was something fierce, and my bright blue lips and eyelids made me horrifying or fascinating, according to taste. The others did their bit in the big studio, but, as they wanted close-ups of my face, just as in a photographic studio, except that the rays these machines emitted were invisible, and the air remained as black as night. I could not rely on my notes and when the man pinched my elbow as a sign to start I was in such a dither that I nearly dried up. The knowledge that I was being watched on a screen by the experts in the board room upstairs made me nervous. I emerged at the end into the lighted corridor dripping with perspiration—to be met with the unexpected verdict that I had been marvelous! As both the Baird and the Marconi systems were being used, all the experts, engineers and wireless technical people were there and, though unknown to me or I to them, they came up and swore I had been extra good. At that time television only reached to a radius of twenty-five miles from London and a set cost ninety-five pounds, so the show was seen by very few people, but it was a historic occasion.

**TZ:** Did you always want to be a writer?

**Blackwood:** Heavens, no, it never entered my head. I was a journalist for years on the *New York Evening Sun* and the *New York Times*, and I did my job well enough, taking promotion now and again, but the desire to become a writer—well, it lit no torch. I had, as I have said, this certain flair for telling stories. At a moment's notice, no theme or idea being in my head, I found I



could invent a tale with beginning, middle, and climax, and I found, to my surprise, that my listeners were enthralled. An acquaintance of mine, a fellow reporter called Angus Hamilton, would occasionally write them down, but it never occurred to me to write them down myself and try and sell them. Clearly something in me sought natural outlet. In fact, it reminds me of a comment once made to me by Dr. Head, then editor of *Brain*, over thirty years ago. "Most writing is merely functional," he said, by which he meant, of course, that there's a lot of stuff one has taken in and, in due course, wants to get out of the system. "Functional," he emphasized, "just like being sick." I think Dr. Head "had something there," as the Yankees put it. But, to go back to your question, no, to be a writer was never even the mildest of ambitions.

**TZ:** What was your ambition when young, then?

**Blackwood:** Looking back now, there are four points that stand out like

blazing lights, like torches. They were so real, so utterly absorbing, so important. If they make you smile, I can only say they make me smile too. Boyish, of course, dreams of youth, akin to yearning to be an engine driver. One was to be a violinist, another a great mountain climber and explorer, the third a poet, and the fourth a holy man. They sound self-contradictory, of course, yet at the moment of their respective dominance they seemed overmasteringly important to me. They were genuine aims in life.

**TZ:** Did you achieve any of them? What about the violinist?

**Blackwood:** The nearest I got was to be second violinist in the Berne Orchestra. I just scraped through this ordeal. My teacher commented later, "If we'd greased your bow, nobody need ever have heard you!" That torch, disappointingly, went out bang, though I did teach violin when scraping for pennies in New York in the nineties.

**TZ:** What followed?

**Blackwood:** The mountaineer ambition.

I don't mean first ascents, sensational climbs, and so forth—for which I cared nothing—but climbing and exploration combined. Above all, perhaps, being with nature. I have always loved mountains, now more than ever. I cannot quite explain it beyond saying that being on the mountains, among forests, crags, and precipices, somehow provided a sense of august companionship human relationships did not satisfy so fully. The satisfaction of this deep yearning seemed to me at that moment a main aim in life. Living in Switzerland at the time, I found ample opportunity for indulging my dream. Of course, I soon found out that climbing alone is dangerous and selfish—since it involved tiresome search parties in case of accident—and that the essential team spirit called for did not lie in me. But perhaps the more dreadful realization came to me that it did not matter to me whether we reached the top or not. I was content to remain at a given spot where I found the surroundings enchanting and exhilarating. It was nature that held me spellbound. And so the mountaineer obsession soon died—or at least its expression.

**TZ:** And the poet?

**Blackwood:** Underlying these last two aims was a much deeper longing, a fierce desire. Whilst I both respected and worshipped the scientist, it was the poet I adored and envied beyond words. I always felt the poet, since his gift included vision, as the highest expression of the race. The accumulation of knowledge was, itself, not wisdom. Well, this particular torch took some time to die. Only after years of attempting sonnets, lyrics, and the rest—though never offered for publication—I came to understand that to feel like a poet is not to be one. Something of this temporary anguish I tried to picture in a book years later, *The Education of Uncle Paul*, though very inadequately dealt with.

**TZ:** You have had poems published, though.

**Blackwood:** They are mostly doggerel, or harmless squibs for children. Many poems by others stay in my mind. I think especially of the work of my very dear friend Alfred Louis, my "Old Man of Vision." [As he spoke, Blackwood's eyes took on a far-off glaze, as if he'd ceased to be in a quiet restaurant off Picadilly and his memories had carried him back to his impoverished days in New York, when he'd made perhaps the deepest friendship of his life with

# Algernon Blackwood

Alfred H. Louis. After he finished speaking there was silence for a while; then he continued.] I owe much to old Louis. When first we met I was in search of a glass of olive oil for food at an old riverfront warehouse on Water Street, New York, and there I noticed an old tramp sitting on a packing case, gazing at me in penetrating fashion. Before the day was out he had set fire to a hundred new thoughts and left them flaming in me. He influenced me more than I knew at the time, and possibly more than anyone else.

In a way, old Louis brings me back to that fourth, and I am sure, the deepest ambition of all, that of the holy man, for there was something of the holy man in Louis. Unlike the violin-playing and mountaineering, it was never a mere safety-valve, a means of expressing energy. It never left me. It haunted. It still does. Its origin I cannot guess: possibly my sainted father's example; possibly the striking personalities of the missionaries and others who frequented our house and were fine, unselfish types; possibly also my leaning in those days of long ago to the idea of reincarnation and the suggestion that I was continuing in this life a training begun in former lives. At any rate, even if the idea borders on the comic, I must be honest and mention that this conception of becoming a holy man was true and vital.

TZ: You mention there a couple of points I would like to come back to—reincarnation and your father—but perhaps we could fill in some of the background of your early life: where and when you were born, how you came to be in New York, and how you came to write for a living.

Blackwood: That's rather a lot in one go. I was born in a small village called Shooter's Hill in Kent, now long since swallowed up by the urban sprawl of London. That was in 1869. I don't remember that place at all. My memories are of a later home, the Manor House in Crayford, also in Kent, where we moved when I was still a baby and stayed there till I was eleven. I had a very happy childhood and early youth in a severe evangelical family, involving a perpetual dread of hell every night I went to bed, yet a heaven that didn't attract me because of the type of people I should meet there. My father and mother I must class with genuinely saintly types. For my father, then financial secretary of the Post Office, I had a special loving adoration,

for he really *lived* his beliefs, much as the wonderful Albert Schweitzer indeed does. My adoration may be exemplified by a trivial incident in St. Martin's le Grand, where my father worked and where he took me walking one day. A street urchin collided heavily with his impressive six-feet-four. He cried, "Where are you runnin' to, six foot of misery?"—and I thought a blast from heaven must strike that urchin to death instantly.

TZ: What was your parents' background?

Blackwood: Indirectly both my mother and my father came from noble families. My father's grandfather was Sir Henry Blackwood, a close friend of Nelson. It was he who bore Nelson's body home after Trafalgar. He was created Baronet Blackwood. His father had been created Baron Dufferin, and it was through that line, my distant cousins, that the present Lord Dufferin is descended. My mother, on the other hand, had been married once before she married my father, to the Duke of Manchester, and had two children by that marriage. Her daughter, dear Sydney, married Lord Kintore, and their daughter, Ettie, is one of my dearest friends. So one way and another there are several members of the nobility amongst my distant relatives.

TZ: How did you, with your distinguished ancestry, end up so poor in New York?

Blackwood: In those days my four ambitions had yet to glimmer. I had no idea what to do, and, I feel, my father had started to despair. I had become so obsessed by Eastern thought and philosophy that my first evangelical training had disappeared. Even before I left our lovely, happy home in Kent, I had met intense difficulty in evading my sainted father's care of my own soul, and instead of carrying a New Testament or one of his tracts in my pocket, I had the *Bhagavad Gita* in one pocket and Patanjali's *Yoga Aphorisms* in the other. I had studied at Wellington College and at the school of the Moravian Brotherhood in the Black Forest, which had a profound influence on my life but in no way provided me with an interest or vocation. At length I passed to Edinburgh University to learn the agricultural trade, though I must confess I spent more time in the dissecting room and attending lectures on pathology. A month after my twenty-first birthday my father sent me

off to Canada, which we had visited a few years earlier, with the idea of farming. I worked for a few months on Dr. Withrow's *Methodist Magazine*, where my earliest writings—though no stories—may be found. Then what money I had I invested in a dairy farm in Toronto, which rapidly failed; then a small hotel, which also rapidly failed. Then, after a few months in the backwoods, I headed for New York, where I taught French and gave violin lessons. Two friends who found themselves similarly derelict helped out. In the verminous cheap boardinghouse where we had a singly filthy room between us, we were always behind with the rent. Then, by luck, I got a job as a reporter on the *Evening Sun* at fifteen dollars a week. It was, though, a half-starved, derelict existence. Time passed. I got a job on the *New York Times* and did well enough. Then the Rainy River goldfields caught me. With a pass I got to Duluth and Minnesota. Gold, yes. But machinery and capital, no. A fairy-tale adventure, but a failure again. So back, eventually, to New York. Here an income, possibly posing to artists at three dollars a sitting, and a venture with a canny Scot who, without my knowing it, had stolen the recipe for the Johann Maria eau de cologne. I got out in time.

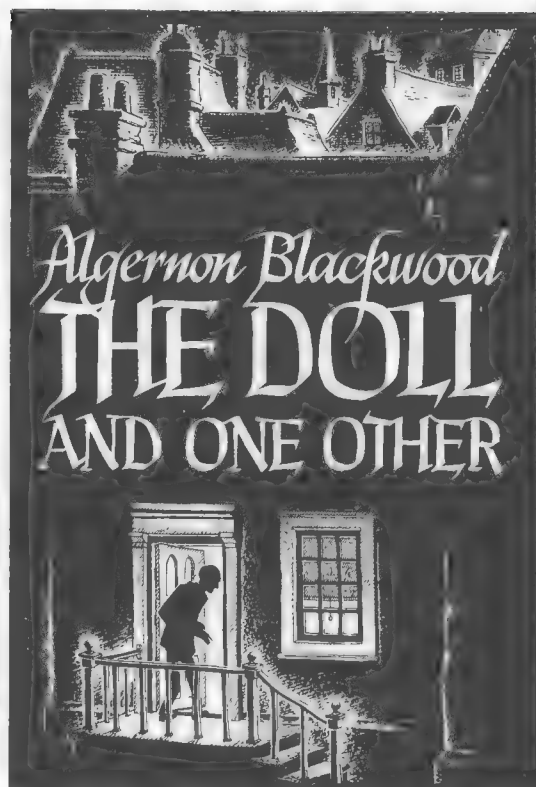
All this, though of course I wasn't to appreciate it at the time, was providing me with ample sources for my later stories, linked with an abnormal sensitivity to beauty; music, sunsets, flowers, whatever it was, struck hard and deep. I had to earn my living, of course, but my real inner dream was always to find out what the universe meant, why I was here, what I was aiming at. I read voraciously, always picking up anything I could find about the subconscious and Eastern philosophy. Also, I felt somehow that all the messages of beauty that poured in upon my sensitive makeup struck my inmost self like a spear, then vanished, yet were not lost. They lay collected, deeply hidden, in my deepest being, one day to emerge.

It is these forgotten messages, I think, that much later in life did emerge in the form of stories. The subconscious, we are told, never forgets; at the same time, it dramatizes its contents. Thus, years later in London, busy with the traffic in dried milk at the age of thirty-six, these experiences, wholly foreign to my daily occupation, boiled up in me, and boiled over in the





Blackwood in 1916 with composer Edward Elgar, who wrote the score for *The Starlight Express*, a musical based on Blackwood's *A Prisoner in Fairyland*. Right: Ronald Clyne's cover for the 1946 Arkham House collection.



form of immature stories. I wrote them down. I became a storyteller. Those horror stories with which I began, however, were little more than the inner drive to express and get rid of—get off my chest, as we say—the accumulated horror of my experience as a newspaper reporter in New York, when my daily routine was reporting vice, violence, fraud: all the abominations of degraded human types.

**TZ:** And this time you got the stories published?

**Blackwood:** A few I sent to magazines, but most were filling my cupboard in the rooms where I lived in Chelsea. By the merest chance I met again Angus Hamilton, the fellow who'd shown an interest in them in New York, you may remember. He asked if I still had any of the stories, and, seeing the cupboard full, he asked if he might borrow a dozen or so of them to read. He promised to send them back, but he was sent to China as a Reuter's agent, and I presumed he had forgotten. It didn't matter to me; I went on writing others. The stories were no good to anybody, the important thing being the relief and keen pleasure I found in their expression. What I did not realize was that Hamilton, without my permission, had sent the stories to a publisher, and some weeks later a letter came from Eveleigh Nash, expressing his interest in the stories and his desire to publish them.

**TZ:** That first collection was published as *The Empty House*. Did you become a full-time writer following its acceptance?

**Blackwood:** No, not immediately. A second collection followed, and then the book of John Silence stories [about an occult detective]. It was the reception to that book which made me realize that I could subsist on my income from writing—though not in this country. I went off to a small village in the Juras where, at four-fifty francs a day, I could live in reasonable comfort. **TZ:** The John Silence stories are probably your best known. How did they originate?

**Blackwood:** They were originally separate imaginative studies of various psychic themes, and it was on the suggestion of Mr. Nash that I grouped them under the common leadership of a single man, Dr. Silence. The title was due to a chance question he put to his gifted reader Maude ffoulkes as we sat at dinner one night—in this very place, as it so happens—discussion the stories and searching for a title and a name for the psychic doctor. Suddenly Nash turned to Mrs. ffoulkes and said, "Didn't you have some ancestor or other with the name of Silence?"—and with one accord we all cried, "Silence!"—for it was just the kind of name we wanted.

**TZ:** Weren't the John Silence stories based on real incidents?

**Blackwood:** All my stories are, to some extent. As I tell in the note I recently added to a new edition of the book, they are the dramatized emotions that I have registered in certain places. "Secret Worship" arose from my revisit many years later to the Moravian school at Koenigsfeld, where I had spent an

unhappy eighteen months when I was sixteen learning German. "Ancient Sorceries" came from a night I spent in Laon, a picturesque little town with an extraordinary atmosphere. I recall writing the story on the backs of envelopes in that old-world inn, so vividly did the place possess my imagination.

**TZ:** What about "The Wendigo" and "The Willows," which some have singled out as the greatest of all stories of the supernatural.

**Blackwood:** "The Willows" arose from a journey made down the Danube in a Canadian canoe many years ago. My friend and I camped on one of the countless lonely islands below Bratislava, and the willows seemed to suffocate us in spite of the gale blowing. A year or two later, making the same trip in a barge, we found a dead body caught by a root, its decayed mass dangling against the sandy shore of the very same island my story describes. As for "The Wendigo," one has only to be isolated in those splendidly wild and lonely forests of northern Canada to sense the presence of that spirit of legend. I had heard the name Wendigo in *Hiawatha*, of course, but years later a friend just back from Labrador told me honest tales about mysterious evacuations of a whole family from a lonely valley because "the Wendigo had come blundering in," as he put it, and "scared them stiff."

**TZ:** Is every one of your stories derived from some personal experience? If so, you must have lead an extraordinarily eventful life.

# Algernon Blackwood

**Blackwood:** You mean that as a rolling stone I have gathered some considerable mental moss. [He smiled wryly.] Let me say that I never sought these episodes. I have experienced many more than I have related in my stories, and then again not all of the events happened to me. Some I heard indirectly, several through my good friend Wilfred Wilson.

**TZ:** But you have, for instance, spent a night in a haunted house?

**Blackwood:** Reputedly haunted, yes, many times. "The Empty House," for example, is a direct relation of what happened to me and a friend when we spent a night in just such a house in Brighton nearly fifty years ago. But as I became better known, especially after the publication of the Silence stories, people came to seek my help and advice—or, more frequently, that of Dr. Silence, in the same manner as I believe Doyle received letters to be forwarded to Sherlock Holmes.

**TZ:** Did you investigate these cases?

**Blackwood:** Not always. I was more often than not out of the country and not able to, though I had acquaintances who would sometimes look into the matters.

**TZ:** Are there any you could relate?

**Blackwood:** There was a strange episode once when I visited, after much procrastination, a widow lady who lived with her unmarried sister near Dorking in Surrey. The story that she related had started when she was but seven, when dressing in her room one morning she saw a pair of feet on the floor before her, complete with men's boots, visible only so far as the ankle. After a while the vision faded. At intervals over the ensuing years the feet reappeared, and with each reappearance a little more of the body was visible, first to the knee, the thigh, the waist until at last the complete figure was visible. It was that of a Franciscan monk. His face bore a kindly, if rather sad, expression, and there was an appealing look in his eyes. No words passed between them, but his thoughts came to her as clearly as if he had shouted them aloud. His work lay, it seemed, among unhappy spirits, mostly those of people recently dead, and he wanted this lady's help. Thereafter the monk would bring these

unhappy spirits to the widow. One day he said that he had an exceptional case of great urgency, and he asked the widow if she could face something that was unusual, even terrible—thereupon he brought in a fully grown chimpanzee.

[At this point Blackwood paused, I suspect to test my reaction, and I confess that a slight smile had, perhaps, betrayed me.] That is much how I accepted the news, although I hope I kept my face expressionless. I made no comment, while doing my best to look as if I accepted the fact as described—namely that the chimpanzee was an unhappy spirit it was her job to help. The widow lady continued her story. She felt no fear of the animal, but found that it was impossible to look into its eyes without being deeply touched by the expression of yearning appeal she saw there. I should add that

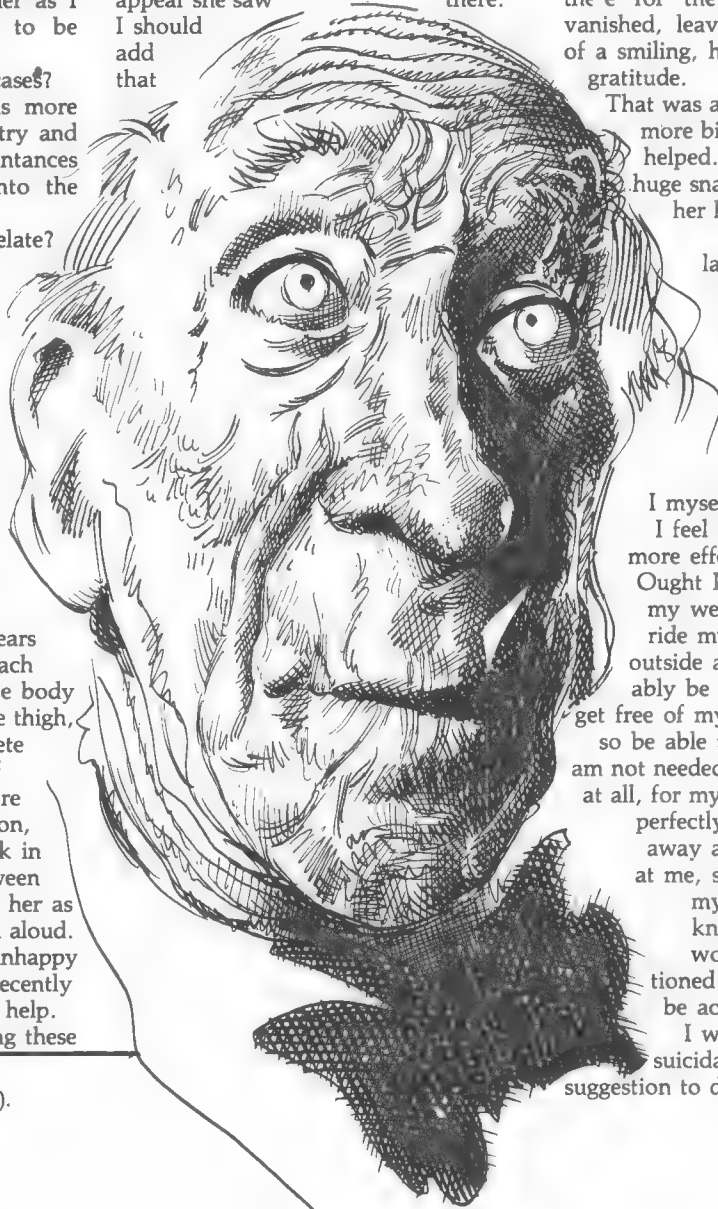
this chimpanzee was entirely in spirit form. The widow's sister saw nothing of it, yet that spirit remained in the house for the next few weeks. The lady's treatment was simple: to love the brute, for only by love could she help to remove the mysterious affliction. As the weeks passed the animal began to show the benefit of the loving-kindness treatment. Its expression became happier. It would disappear for considerable intervals, then reappear again, looking happier each time.

Then end came suddenly one afternoon. The chimpanzee came in to the lady's room, looked hard at her with the happiest expression she had ever seen, then lay down calmly on the floor and died. She knelt beside the body but at that moment the chimpanzee vanished and in its place was the figure of a young girl. She stood there for the merest moment, then vanished, leaving behind the memory of a smiling, happy face beaming with gratitude.

That was apparently the first of the more bizarre cases that this lady helped. There was, afterward, a huge snake which she found it in her heart to love and release.

**TZ:** But why had this lady asked for your help?

**Blackwood:** Much the same thought was going through my mind, but having related her long story, she came to the point. "What I wanted to ask you," she said quite calmly, "is this: if I myself were out of the body, I feel I could do this work far more effectively than I can now. Ought I to take that step? With my weak heart, I have only to ride my bicycle fast up the hill outside and I should unquestionably be free. Have I the right to get free of my body in that way, and so be able to do my work better? I am not needed particularly on earth, if at all, for my sister would understand perfectly." And her voice trailed away as she looked inquiringly at me, searchingly too, awaiting my reply. For some reason known only to herself, my words would have unquestioned authority, my judgment be accepted as final. Whether I was dealing with incipient suicidal mania, or whether the suggestion to do away with herself was



Caricature of Blackwood by "Isaac Bickerstaff" (Don Evans).

## THE GLAMOUR OF THE SNOW



Two illustrations by W. Graham Robertson for stories in the 1912 collection *Pan's Garden*.

to be taken as literally as she had stated it, only one answer, I felt, was possible. Nor was it difficult to use unusually authoritative words in warning her positively that the step she proposed would be wholly ineffective, since the spirits "on the other side" would condemn her for it. The help she had always given, I assured her, was largely due to the very fact that she was still "in the body," but out of it she would find she had lost that power. The spirits would no longer respect or believe in her; it would be a fatal thing to do. Sophistry or jesuitry, maybe, but it left my conscience clear.

**TZ:** And you had many investigations like that?

**Blackwood:** More than enough, and far more than I could relate this evening.

[I glanced at the restaurant clock and appreciated that the hour was becoming late for the old man, though there was much more I wanted to ask him. I asked if he would mind my accompanying him back to his flat, and together we left the restaurant. It was a walk of some good three miles, but one that Blackwood seldom avoided, especially on such a crisp, fresh night as this.]

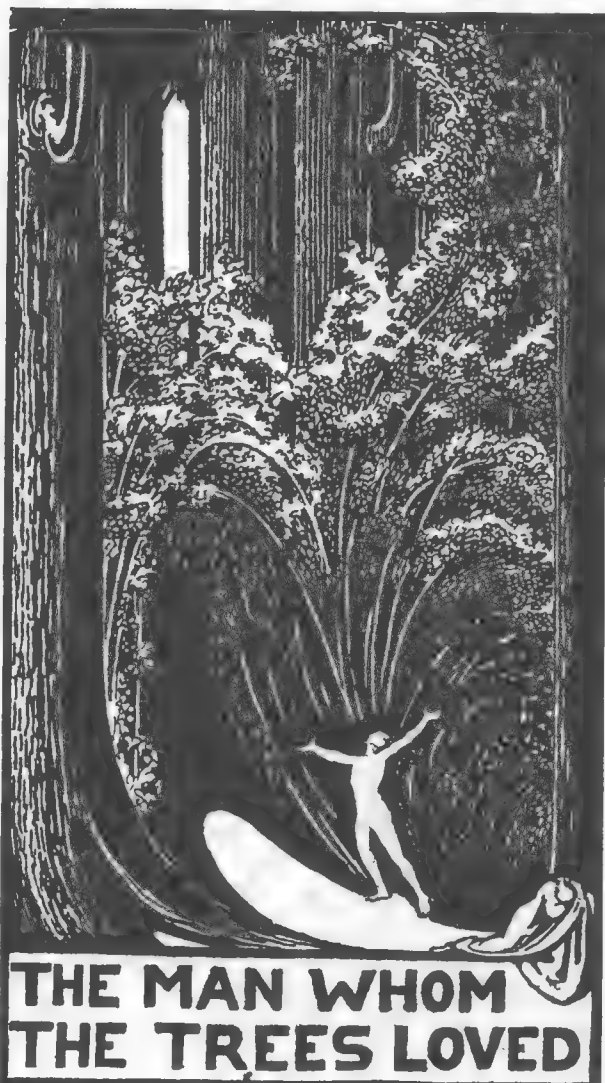
**TZ:** I have not yet asked you about your views on reincarnation, a common theme in many of your stories.

**Blackwood:** As a boy, as a young man, I remember, I accepted the theory of reincarnation without reserve. Karma, cause and effect, Devachan, the uselessness of definite memory, the justice, logic, fairness of the conception, with all the rest, found no opposition in my mind. Souls without a past behind them, springing suddenly into existence, out of nothing, with marked

mental and moral peculiarities, are a conception as monstrous as would be the corresponding conception of babies suddenly appearing from nowhere, unrelated to anybody but showing marked racial and family types. Well, it may be true—personally, I hope it is—but my youthful acceptance has disappeared. Doubts have crept in since that happy ardent period. Personally, I know no proof that reincarnation is true.

**TZ:** No personal experiences?

**Blackwood:** Perhaps one. It concerns my book *Julius Le Vallon*, now long out of print. It is a study of reincarnation, the title character based on a Hindu medical student in Edinburgh, when I studied at the university. The story includes certain scenes, one being a description of a sun worship ritual round a great smooth dome in a desert. As dawn is about to break over the vast expanse of sand, a concourse of people stand waiting for the sunrise. All are wearing robes of various colors, the colors of the spectrum, and gradually they sort themselves out according to these colors till they stand motionless at last in circles round the dome. Each ring has its particular color and is perhaps ten figures deep. They stand absolutely still and silent. Then, as the sun shows its first piercing ray over the rim of the horizon, they begin to move, the innermost ring to the right, the next to the left, the third again to the right and so on until the whole mass of worshipers shows these



concentric rings of color in a huge single wheel. And as they move, each ring has the particular note appropriate to its color, so that vast choral song rises in greeting to the now-visible sun. This strange, even magnificent, picture rose vividly before me as I attempted to describe it.

The second scene describes how, after an unspecified historical battle, the prisoners were made to stand on a narrow ledge inside a great circular building. The ledge sloped toward the deep space below. It provided just enough room for the prisoner to hold a precarious balance with difficulty. On the ground far below, their sharp points uppermost, spears were planted. Some of the prisoners balanced as long as they could, then fell to their cruel death; others preferred to cut their anguish short and jumped instantly.

Now, a letter arrived from a stranger one day, the writer explaining that he was specially interested in my book, *Julius Le Vallon*, and would like to meet me if possible. He said he was a staff captain in the Australian army, his regiment being at that moment in

# Algernon Blackwood

Egypt. Certain experiences, he mentioned, that had come his way pointed to the possibility that they were memories of earlier lives, and he would like to discuss them with me. After a considerable interval, when I happened to be in Bordighera in northern Italy, he came over from Mentone and we spent an afternoon together. Since early youth he had been a firm believer in reincarnation, feeling very strongly, without quite knowing why, that one of his previous lives had been in ancient Egypt. It had not been a specially distinguished life, but it had been connected, probably in some minor capacity, with the priesthood or, at any rate, with the temple life. He soon came to his point, for he asked me almost at once how I knew about the two vivid pictures my book described and from whence they were derived. But I could only tell him that while writing the book they just rose in my mind, whereupon he told me with intense conviction, his sincerity at any rate unquestionable, that he definitely remembered both scenes. He had been present, he had witnessed them. He had stood worshipping the sun in a colored robe; he had also, if much earlier still, stood among the prisoners of war on that awful ledge, then leaped to his death on the spears below. And when I had to insist that I had not been favored with any personal memory myself, and that it was just imagination, he repeated with a shrug of his shoulders, "But of course, imagination is memory, isn't it?" So there you are. Had I perhaps also witnessed those scenes in a former life and my memory of them suddenly come to the fore as I tried to write that book?

TZ: Perhaps you had read such scenes yourself in your youth and had forgotten them, but retained them in our subconscious.

Blackwood: Perhaps.

TZ: You have always been a voracious reader. What are your favorite books?

Blackwood: Which do I most reread or rely on, do you mean? The *Bhagavad Gita* remains the profoundest world scripture I have ever read. I also find much in de Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, Patanjali's *Yoga Aphorisms*, Berkeley's *Dialogues*.

TZ: What about supernatural stories?

Blackwood: Let me see. I have always thought of Henry James's "The Two Magics" as the prince of all ghost stories, and I find I cannot read "The Turn of the Screw," even in daylight,

without a genuine shiver down my spine. Father Benson had some first rate ghostly tales in his *Mirror of Shalott*, but his brother's efforts in the same direction, *The Room in the Tower*, never quite came off, I felt. For that matter neither Monty James nor Bierce have ever frightened me, though Machen once or twice nearly achieved this. Coppard, Wakefield, Whitehead never let the reader down, and May Sinclair has a very special secret all her own. Her *Tales for the Uneasy* are admirable. I saw something of her years ago and recall my surprise that this little, rather dried-up spinster had all this sense of dramatic mystery buried inside her. Her sense of wonder did not betray itself in her conversation, but it lay there like a sleeping volcano. Mary Freeman has, too, more than a touch of it. "Le Horla," de Maupassant's little masterpiece when his mind was going, of course, you know. Also "The Open Window" by Saki—oh, and many others.

TZ: You mention Arthur Machen, and I believe you knew him quite well. Were you not both once members of the Order of the Golden Dawn?

Blackwood: We were. I read all of Machen's books over forty years ago, but they left no special mark on me. I thought his *Hieroglyphics* far and away his best work.

TZ: How did you come to join the Golden Dawn?

Blackwood: It was Yeats who persuaded me to join, ostensibly for the study of the Kabbala and Hebrew ceremonial magic. I was, you should know, a Theosophist long before this, as, too, was Yeats. The Golden Dawn was not what I sought, however. It gave me my novel *The Human Chord*, at any rate, and Yeats and Maud Gonne were stimulating people to know.

TZ: In your earlier list of writers I notice you didn't mention H.P. Lovecraft. Are you acquainted with his work?

Blackwood: I have read Lovecraft with keen enjoyment but, while appreciating to the full his gorgeous imagination and feeling for atmosphere, the thrill of fear I demand in such stories did not come. He has the material in plenty, in more than plenty, but I am oppressed rather than thrilled by what I feel to be overloading. There is a piling up and up of detail that, for me, defeats its own end. He is never wholly what we call "master of his material," and the cumulative effect is a bit bludgeoning on

the mind. I long for something to be left to the imagination suggested, insinuated, instead of forced upon me with an adjectival wealth that tends to weary. I also do not react sympathetically to his preoccupation with corpses and decay. It was all I could do to finish reading his "Rats in the Wall," a tale that stirred repulsion rather than woke horror. What we call "spiritual horror" stirs fear in me, while physical horror leaves me unresponsive, even antagonistic. I had never heard of Lovecraft until introduced to him by an American correspondent Allen McElfresh. Then, at just that same time, I was also asked about him by the very gracious August Derleth.

TZ: Derleth has recently published two of your stories under his Arkham House imprint, has he not?

Blackwood: Indeed, and let me go on record to say how handsomely Mr. Derleth treats his authors. The book itself delighted me—print, margins, general setup and all—and I was particularly pleased with Robert Clyne's jacket, with its restraint and fine taste especially. It strikes just the right note.

TZ: Have you written any more stories since then?

Blackwood: Since the war I have had no time for writing. Possibly there has been so much horror in life that my imagination turned away from adding to it. At any rate, inspiration, even if time had allowed, did not prompt that way. Most of my time now is taken up with writing and preparing talks for wireless and television. I did complete a short piece called "Romantic Remains," which Mr. Derleth succeeded in securing publication in America, but I have many uncompleted pieces which I may or may not return to.

TZ: How do you set about writing your stories?

Blackwood: Well, I must first feel ghostly, a condition not to be artificially induced. In each case an emotion of a very possessive kind produced each tale. There was a touch of gooseflesh down my back as I watched my Wendigo in a mountain inn above Champéry in the French Alps and heard the November nightwind crashing among the pine forests beyond the window. There were shivers down the spine, too, as the horror of that "Willows" island crept over the imagination. I think, indeed, the majority of my tales were accompanied at birth by what may be called a delicious shudder.

TZ: What are your favorites among



your own stories?

**Blackwood:** It is extremely difficult to say which of my short tales I consider the best, but I am rather inclined to agree with a good many of my readers and choose "The Willows," though "Ancient Sorceries" I place very close to it. As to my full-length works, *The Centaur* is very dear to my heart.

[We were now very close to Blackwood's rooms, and I knew that my interview must draw to a close. I still had a hundred and more questions to ask him, but I realized I would have to limit myself. How could I choose, though, just one more question to ask of a man whose life had been so eventful, whose beliefs were so interesting, and who had met so many fascinating people, from Gurdjieff to Gracie Fields, from Yeats to Axel Munthe, from Ouspensky to J.W. Dunne, from A.E. Waite to John Buchan? But the time was up. Grasping at straws, I asked my final question.]

**TZ:** With a life as eventful and interesting as yours, if you could live it over again, would you change it?

**Blackwood:** If I could now live my life again, I know positively what I would choose: namely, to be about twenty-five, with enough to live on so that I need not spend all my time and energy in providing a roof, food, clothing, and the like, but to learn the necessary languages, and then to go out East and search, search, search—I mean, for a teacher. I am convinced that in the East lies the possibility of learning the real meaning of life, of death, of the universe, for I am now more convinced than ever that the Eastern wisdom, though hard to find, offers the true solution to those deep problems that trouble all thinking minds today, as always.

[I thanked Mr. Blackwood for his time and watched him as he climbed the short flight of stairs to the door to his apartment. At the top he looked back down to me.]

**Blackwood:** As I cannot live my life again, let me just say that I enjoy this life, but find it too short. I have every intention of living to be one hundred. Come and see me again when I do, in 1969.

[With that, he opened the door and disappeared from view. I never saw Algernon Blackwood again. He died in December 10, 1951, aged eighty-two. I wonder if his spirit has been reborn, and who and where he is now.]



Lynd Ward's 1937 illustration for "The Wendigo," a tale of terror in the North Woods.

The preceding interview never happened. Oh, that it had! What further questions I might have asked. I am far too young to have known Blackwood personally, being but three years old when he passed away. But over the last few years, in my researches for the first full-length biography of Blackwood, I have had the good fortune to meet many people who did know the author firsthand, and their recollections make me all the more envious that I never had the pleasure of his acquaintance. The smile that came to the faces of those I interviewed was enough to show that here was a man who had left behind him a wealth of fond memories.

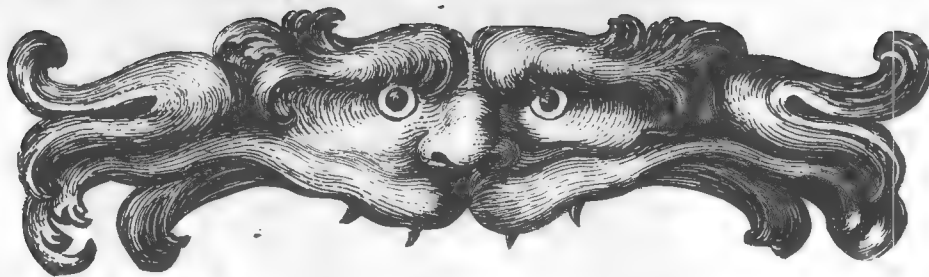
The above, therefore, is by no means fictional. The answers are, for the most part, in Blackwood's own words, taken from letters he wrote, radio talks that he gave, or essays that he completed, some of which have never been published. In some cases I have changed tense and sentence construction in order to keep the tone conversational, but nowhere have I changed the meaning or intent of what he had to say.

I must thank Michael Horniman of A.P. Watt and the Estate of Algernon Black-

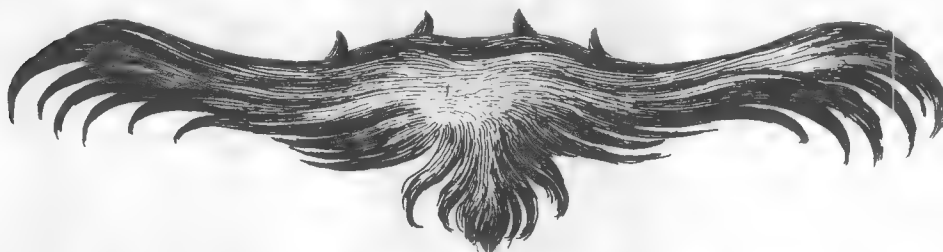
wood for permission to quote from Blackwood's published and unpublished work. I must also thank Patricia Ainley, Allen McElfresh, Edward Wagenknecht, and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin for making available to me copies of Blackwood's letters in their possession.

There was much more I could have included, and, had I known Blackwood directly, much I might have corrected, for though the responses given here are exactly as Blackwood would have given them, that does not always make them correct. Blackwood's writings contain many errors, some perhaps accidental through tricks of memory, others quite deliberate where he wished to hide the identity of people still living and to respect their privacy. Thus he occasionally bent the truth. I have kept to these slight diversions from veracity because, paradoxically, they add to the genuineness of this interview. Blackwood would never have betrayed his faiths and he knew that the truth is, after all, not always so interesting. Nevertheless, I hope the foregoing conversation helps bring alive a man I feel I have begun to know in recent years and only wish I could have met. 17

Courtesy Gerry de la Ree, *The Art of the Fantastic* (Saddle River, NJ, 1978)



Two Tales by Algernon Blackwood



# THE OCCUPANT OF THE ROOM

*The hotel room was warm, cozy—and haunted by the certainty of death.*

He arrived late at night by the yellow *diligence*, stiff and cramped after the toilsome ascent of three slow hours. The village, a single mass of shadow, was already asleep. Only in front of the little hotel was there noise and light and bustle—for a moment. The horses, with tired, slouching gait, crossed the road and disappeared into the stable of their own accord, their harness trailing in the dust; and the lumbering *diligence* stood for the night where they had dragged it—the body of a great yellow-sided beetle with broken legs.

In spite of his physical weariness the schoolmaster revelling in the first hours of his ten-guinea holiday, felt exhilarated. For the high Alpine valley was marvellously still; stars twinkled over the torn ridges of the Dent du Midi where spectral snows gleamed against rocks that looked like ebony; and the keen air smelt of pine forests, dew-soaked pastures, and freshly sawn wood. He took it all in with a kind of bewildered delight for a few minutes, while the other three passengers gave directions about their luggage and went to their rooms. Then he turned and walked over the coarse matting into the glare of the hall, only just able to resist stopping to examine the big mountain map that hung upon the wall by the door.

And, with a sudden disagreeable shock, he came down from the ideal to the actual. For at the inn—the only inn—there was no vacant room. Even the available sofas were occupied . . .

How stupid he had been not to write! Yet it had been impossible, he remembered, for he had come to the decision suddenly that morning in Geneva, en-

ticed by the brilliance of the weather after a week of rain.

They talked endlessly, this gold-braided porter and the hard-faced old woman—her face was hard, he noticed—gesticulating all the time, and pointing all about the village with suggestions that he ill understood, for his French was limited and their *patois* was fearful.

"*There!*"—he might find a room, "or *there!* But we are, *hélas*, full—more full than we care about. To-morrow, perhaps—if So-and-So give up their rooms—!" And then, with much shrugging of shoulders, the hard-faced old woman stared at the gold-braided porter, and the porter stared sleepily at the schoolmaster.

At length, however, by some process of hope he did not himself understand, and following directions given by the old woman that were utterly unintelligible, he went out into the street and walked towards a dark group of houses she had pointed out to him. He only knew that he meant to thunder at a door and ask for a room. He was too weary to think out details. The porter half made to go with him, but turned back at the last moment to speak with the old woman. The houses sketched themselves dimly in the general blackness. The air was cold. The whole valley was filled with the rush and and thunder of falling water. He was thinking vaguely that the dawn could not be very far away, and that he might even spend the night wandering in the woods, when there was a sharp noise behind him and he turned to see a figure hurrying after him. It was the porter—running.

And in the little hall of the inn there began again a confused three-cornered conversation, with frequent muttered colloquy and whispered asides in *patois* between the woman and the porter—the net result of which was that, “If Monsieur did not object—there *was* a room, after all, on the first floor—only it was in a sense ‘engaged,’ That is to say—”

But the schoolmaster took the room without inquiring too closely into the puzzle that had somehow provided it so suddenly. The ethics of hotel-keeping had nothing to do with him. If the woman offered him quarters it was not for him to argue with her whether the said quarters were legitimately hers to offer.

But the porter, evidently a little thrilled, accompanied the guest up to the room and supplied in a mixture of French and English details omitted by the landlady—and Minturn, the schoolmaster, soon shared the thrill with him, and found himself in the atmosphere of a possible tragedy.

All who know the peculiar excitement that belongs to lofty mountain valleys where dangerous climbing is a chief feature of the attractions, will understand a certain faint element of high alarm that goes with the picture. One looks up at the desolate, soaring ridges and thinks involuntarily of the men who find their pleasure for days and nights together calling perilous summits among the clouds, and conquering inch by inch the icy peaks that for ever shake their dark terror in the sky. The atmosphere of adventure, spiced with the possible horror of a very grim order of tragedy, is inseparable from any imaginative contemplation of the scene; and the idea Minturn gleaned from the half-frightened porter lost nothing by his ignorance of the language. This English-woman, the real occupant of the room, had insisted on going without a guide. She had left just before daybreak two days before—the porter had seen her start—and . . . she had not returned! The

route was difficult and dangerous, yet not impossible for a skilled climber, even a solitary one. And the Englishwoman was an experienced mountaineer. Also, she was self-willed, careless of advice, bored by warnings, self-confident to a degree. Queer, moreover; for she kept entirely to herself, and sometimes remained in her room with locked doors, admitting no one, for days together; a ‘crank,’ evidently, of the first water.

This much Minturn gathered clearly enough from the porter’s talk while his luggage was brought in and the room set to rights; further, too, that the search party had gone out and *might*, of course, return at any moment. In which case— . . . Thus the room was empty, yet still hers. “If the Monsieur did not object—if the risk he ran of having to turn out suddenly in the night— . . .” It was the loquacious porter who furnished the details that made the transaction questionable; and Minturn dismissed the loquacious porter as soon as possible, and prepared to get into the hastily arranged bed and snatch all the hours of sleep he could before he was turned out.

At first, it must be admitted, he felt uncomfortable—distinctly uncomfortable. He was in some one else’s room. He had really no right to be there. It was in the nature of an unwarranted intrusion; and while he unpacked he



Illustrations by Paula Goodman

he kept looking over his shoulder as though some one were watching him from the corners. Any moment, it seemed, he would hear a step in the passage, a knock would come to the door, the door would open, and there he would see this vigorous Englishwoman looking him up and down with anger. Worse still—he would hear her voice asking him what he was doing in her room—her bedroom. Of course, he had an adequate explanation, but still—!

Then, reflecting that he was already half undressed, the humour of it flashed for a second across his mind, and he laughed—*quietly*. And at once, after that laughter, under his breath, came the sudden sense of tragedy he had felt before. Perhaps, even while he smiled, her body lay broken and cold upon those awful heights, the wind of snow playing over her hair, her glazed eyes staring sightless up to the stars . . . It made him shudder. The sense of this woman whom he had never seen, whose name even he did not know, became extraordinarily real. Almost he could imagine that she was somewhere in the room with him, hidden, observing all he did.

He opened the door softly to put his boots outside, and when he closed it again he turned the key. Then he finished unpacking and distributed his few things about the room. It was soon done; for, in the first place, he had only a small Gladstone and a knapsack, and secondly, the only place where he could spread his clothes was the sofa. There was no chest of drawers, and the cupboard, an unusually large and solid one, was locked. The Englishwoman's things had evidently been hastily put away in it. The only sign of her recent presence was a bunch of faded *Alpenrosen* standing in a glass jar upon the washhand stand. This, and a certain faint perfume, were all that remained. In spite, however, of these very slight evidences, the whole room was pervaded with a curious sense of occupancy that he found exceedingly distasteful. One moment the atmosphere seemed subtly charged with a "just left" feeling; the next it was a queer awareness of "still here" that made him turn and look hurriedly behind him.

Altogether, the room inspired him with a singular aversion, and the strength of this aversion seemed the only excuse for his tossing the faded flowers out of the window, and then hanging his mackintosh upon the cupboard door in such a way as to screen it as much as possible from view. For the sight of that big, ugly cupboard, filled with the clothing of a woman who might then be beyond any further need of covering—thus his imagination insisted on picturing it—touched in him a startled sense of the incongruous that did not stop there, but crept through his mind gradually till it merged somehow into a sense of a rather grotesque horror. At any rate, the sight of that cupboard was offensive, and he covered it almost instinctively. Then, turning out the electric light, he got into bed.

He could imagine  
that she was  
somewhere in the room  
with him,  
hidden,  
observing all he did.

But the instant the room was dark he realised that it was more than he could stand; for, with the blackness, there came a sudden rush of cold that he found it hard to explain. And the odd thing was that, when he lit the candle beside his bed, he noticed that his hand trembled.

This, of course, was too much. His imagination was taking liberties and must be called to heel. Yet the way he called it to order was significant, and its very deliberateness betrayed a mind that has already admitted fear. And fear, once in, is difficult to dislodge. He lay there upon his elbow in bed and carefully took note of all the objects in the room—with the intention, as it were, of taking an inventory of everything his senses perceived, then drawing a line adding them up finally, and saying with decision, "That's all the room contains! I've counted every single thing. There is nothing more. *Now*—I may sleep in peace!"

And it was during this absurd process of enumerating the furniture of the room that the dreadful sense of distressing lassitude came over him that made it difficult even to finish counting. It came swiftly, yet with an amazing kind of violence that overwhelmed him softly and easily with a sensation of enervating weariness hard to describe. And its first effect was to banish fear. He no longer possessed enough energy to feel really afraid or nervous. The cold remained, but the alarm vanished. And into every corner of his usually vigorous personality crept the insidious poison of a *muscular* fatigue—at first—that in a few seconds, it seemed, translated itself into *spiritual* inertia. A sudden consciousness of the foolishness, the crass futility of life, of effort, of fighting—of all that makes life worth living, oozed into every fibre of his being, and left him utterly weak. A spirit of black pessimism, that was not even vigorous enough to assert itself, invaded the secret chambers of his heart . . .

Every picture that presented itself to his mind came dressed in grey shadows; those bored and sweating horses toiling up the ascent to—nothing! that hard-faced landlady taking so much trouble to let her desire for gain conquer her sense of morality—for a few francs! That gold-braided porter, so talkative, fussy, energetic, and so anxious to tell all he knew! What was the use of them all? And for



himself, what in the world was the good of all the labour and drudgery he went through in that preparatory school where he was junior master? What could it lead to? Wherein lay the value of so much uncertain toil, when the ultimate secrets of life were hidden and no one knew the final goal? How foolish was effort, discipline, work! How vain was pleasure! How trivial the noblest life...!

With a jump that nearly upset the candle Min-turn challenged this weak mood. Such vicious thoughts were usually so remote from his normal character that the sudden vile invasion produced a swift reaction. Yet, only for a moment. Instantly, again, the depression descended upon him like a wave. His work—it could lead to nothing but the dreary labour of a small headmastership after all—seemed as vain and foolish as his holiday in the Alps. What an idiot he had been, to be sure, to come out with a knapsack merely to work himself into a state of exhaustion climbing over toilsome mountains that led to nowhere—resulted in nothing. A dreariness of the grave possessed him. Life was a ghastly fraud! Religion a childish humbug! Everything was merely a trap—a trap of death; a coloured toy that Nature used as a decoy! But a decoy for what? For nothing! There was no meaning in anything. The only *real* thing was—DEATH. And the happiest people were those who found it soonest.

*Then why wait for it to come?*

He sprang out of bed, thoroughly frightened. This was horrible. Surely mere physical fatigue could not produce a world so black, an outlook so dismal, a cowardice that struck with such sudden hopelessness at the very roots of life? For, normally, he was cheerful and strong, full of the tides of healthy living; and this appalling lassitude swept the very basis of his personality into nothingness and the desire for death. It was like the development of a Secondary Personality. He had read, of course, how certain persons who suffered shocks developed thereafter entirely different characteristics, memory, tastes, and so forth. It had all rather frightened him. Though scientific men vouched for it, it was hardly to be believed. Yet here was a similar thing taking place in his own consciousness. He was, beyond question, experiencing all the mental variations of—*someone else!* It was un-moral. It was awful. It was—well, after all, at the same time, it was uncommonly interesting.

And this interest he began to feel was the first sign of his returned normal Self. For to feel interest is to live, and to love life.

He sprang into the middle of the room—then switched on the electric light. And the first thing that struck his eye was—the big cupboard.

"Hallo! There's that—beastly cupboard!" he exclaimed to himself, involuntarily, yet aloud. It held all the clothes, the swinging skirts and coats and summer blouses of the dead woman. For he knew

now—somehow or other—that she *was* dead...

At that moment, through the open windows, rushed the sound of falling water, bringing with it a vivid realisation of the desolate, snow-swept heights. He saw her—positively *saw* her!—lying where she had fallen, the frost upon her cheeks, the snowdust eddying about her air and eyes, her broken limbs pushing against the lumps of ice. For a moment the sense of spiritual lassitude—of the emptiness of life—vanished before this picture of broken effort—of a small human force battling pluckily, yet in vain, against the impersonal and pitiless potencies of inanimate nature—and he found himself again his normal self. Then instantly, returned again that terrible sense of cold, nothingness, emptiness...

And he found himself standing opposite the big cupboard where her clothes were. He suddenly wanted to see those clothes—things she had used and worn. Quite close he stood, almost touching it. The next second he had touched it. His knuckles struck upon the wood.

Why he knocked is hard to say. It was an instinctive movement probably. Something in his deepest self dictated it—ordered it. He knocked at the door. And the dull sound upon the wood into the stillness of that room brought—horror. Why it should have done so he found it as hard to explain to himself as why he should have felt impelled to knock. The fact remains that when he heard the faint reverberation inside the cupboard, it brought with it so vivid a realisation of the woman's presence that he stood there shivering upon the floor with a dreadful sense of anticipation; he almost expected to hear an answering knock from within—the rustling of the hanging skirts perhaps—or, worse still, to see the locked door slowly open towards him.

And from that moment, he declares that in some way or other he must have partially lost control of himself, or at least of his better judgement; for he became possessed by such an overmastering desire to tear open that cupboard door and see the clothes within, that he tried every key in the room in the vain effort to unlock it, and then, finally, before he quite realised what he was doing—rang the bell!

But, having rung the bell for no obvious or intelligent reason at two o'clock in the morning, he then stood waiting in the middle of the floor for the servant to come, conscious for the first time that something outside his ordinary self had pushed him towards the act. It was almost like an internal voice that directed him... and thus, when at last steps came down the passage and he faced the cross and sleepy chambermaid, amazed at being summoned at such an hour, he found no difficulty in the matter of what he should say. For the same power that insisted he should open the cupboard door also impelled him to utter words over which he apparently had no control.

## THE OCCUPANT OF THE ROOM

"It's not *you* I rang for!" he said with decision and impatience. "I want a man. Wake the porter and send him up to me at once—hurry! I tell you, hurry—!"

And when the girl had gone, frightened at his earnestness, Minturn realised that the words surprised himself as much as they surprised her. Until they were out of his mouth he had not known what exactly he was saying. But now he understood that some force, foreign to his own personality, was using his mind and organs. The black depression that had possessed him a few moments before was also part of it. The powerful mood of this vanished woman had somehow momentarily taken possession of him—communicated, possibly, by the atmosphere of things in the room still belonging to her. But even now, when the porter, without coat or collar, stood beside him in the room, he did not understand why he insisted, with a positive fury admitting no denial, that the key of that cupboard must be found and the door instantly opened.

The scene was a curious one. After some perplexed whispering with the chambermaid at the end of the passage, the porter managed to find and produce the key in question. Neither he or the girl knew clearly what this excited Englishman was up to, or why he was so passionately intent upon opening the cupboard at two o'clock in the morning. They

watched him with an air of wondering what was going to happen next. But something of his curious earnestness, even of his late fear, communicated itself to them, and the sound of the key grating in the lock made them both jump.

They held their breath as the creaking door swung slowly open. All heard the clatter of that other key as it fell against the wooden floor—within. The cupboard had been locked *from the inside*. But it was the scared housemaid, from her position in the corridor, who first saw—and with a wild scream fell crashing against the bannisters.

The porter made no attempt to save her. The schoolmaster and himself made a simultaneous rush towards the door, now wide open. They, too, had seen.

There were no clothes, skirts, or blouses on the pegs, but they saw the body of the Englishwoman suspended in mid-air, the head bent forward. Jarred by the movement of unlocking, the body swung slowly round to face them . . . Pinned upon the inside of the door was a hotel envelope with the following words pencilled in straggling writing:

"Tired—unhappy—hopelessly depressed . . . I cannot face life any longer . . . All is black. I must put an end to it . . . I meant to do it on the mountains, but was afraid. I slipped back to my room unobserved. This way is easiest and best . . ."

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## THE LITTLE BEGGAR

*Who was the mysterious child—and what lay hidden in his suitcase?*

**H**e was on his way from his bachelor flat to the club, a man of middle age with a slight stoop, and an expression of face firm yet gentle, the blue eyes with light and courage in them, and a faint hint of melancholy—or was it resignation?—about the strong mouth. It was early in April, a slight drizzle of warm rain falling through the coming dusk; but spring was in the air, a bird sang rapturously on a pavement tree. And the man's heart wakened at the sound, for it was the lift of the year, and low in the western sky above the London roofs there was a band of tender colour.

His way led him past one of the great terminal

stations that open the gates of London seawards; the birds, the coloured clouds, and the thought of a sunny coast-line worked simultaneously in his heart. These messages of spring woke music in him. The music, however, found no expression, beyond a quiet sigh, so quiet that not even a child, had he carried one in his big arms, need have noticed. Upon the wet pavement, where the street lamps already laid their network of faint gold, he saw, perhaps a dozen yards in front of him, the figure of a little boy.

The boy, for some reason, caught his attention and his interest vividly. He was dressed in Etons, the broad white collar badly rumpled, the pointed coat

hitched grotesquely sideways, while, from beneath the rather grimy straw hat, his thick light hair escaped at various angles. This general air of effort and distress was due to the fact that the little fellow was struggling with a bag packed evidently to bursting point, too big and heavy for him to manage for more than ten yards at a time. He changed it from one hand to the other, resting it in the intervals upon the ground, each effort making it rub against his leg so that the trousers hoisted considerably above the boot. He was a pathetic figure.

"I must help him," said the man. "He'll never get there at this rate. He'll miss his train to the sea." For his destination was obvious, since a pair of wooden spades was tied clumsily and insecurely to the straps of the bursting bag.

Occasionally, too, the lad, who seemed about ten years old, looked about him to right and left, questionably, anxiously, as though he expected someone

— someone to help, or perhaps to meet him. His behaviour even gave the impression that he was not quite sure of his way. The man hurried to overtake him.

"I really must give the little beggar a hand," he repeated to himself, as he went. He smiled. The fatherly, protective side of him, naturally strong, was touched—touched a little more, perhaps, than the occasion seemed to warrant. The smile broadened into a jolly laugh, as he came up against the great stuffed bag, now resting on the pavement, its owner panting beside it, still looking to right and left alternately. At which instant, exactly, the boy, hearing his step, turned round, and for the first time looked him full in the face with a pair of big blue eyes that held unabashed and happy welcome in them.

"Oh, I say, sir, it's most awfully ripping of you," he said in a confiding voice, before the man had time to speak. "I hunted everywhere; but I never thought of looking *behind* me."

But the man standing dumb and astonished for a few seconds beside the little fellow, missed the latter sentence altogether, for there was in the clear blue eyes an expression so trustful, so frankly affectionate almost, and in the voice music of so natural a kind, that all the tenderness in him rose like a sudden tide, and he yearned towards the boy as though he were his little son. Thought, born of some sudden revival of emotion, flashed back swiftly across a stretch of twelve blank years ... and for an instant the lines of the mouth grew deeper, though in the eyes the light turned softer, brighter ...

"It's too big for you, my boy," he said, recovering himself with jolly laugh; "or, rather, you're not big enough—yet—for it—eh! Where to, now? Ah! the station, I suppose?" And he stooped to grasp the handles of the bulging bag, first poking the spades more securely in beneath the straps; but in doing so became aware that something the boy had said had given him pain. What was it? Why was it? This stray little stranger, met upon the London pavements! Yet so swift is thought that, even while he stopped and before his fingers actually touched the leather, he had found what hurt him—and smiled a little at himself. It was the mode of address the boy made use of, contradicting faintly the affectionate expression in the eyes. It was the



# THE LITTLE BEGGAR

word "sir" that made him feel like a schoolmaster or a tutor; it made him feel old. It was not the word he needed, and—yes—had longed for, somehow almost expected. And there was such strange trouble in his mind and heart that, as he grasped the bag, he did not catch the boy's rejoinder to his question. But, of course, it must be the railway station; he was going to the seaside for Easter; his people would be at the ticket-office waiting for him. Bracing himself a little for the effort, he seized the leather handles and lifted the bag from the ground.

"Oh, thanks awfully, sir!" repeated the boy. He watched him with a true schoolboy grin of gratitude, as though it were great fun, yet also with a true urchin's sense that the proper thing had happened, since such jobs, of course, were for grown-up men. And this time, though he used the objectionable word again, the voice betrayed recognition of the fact that he somehow had a right to look to this particular man for help, and that this particular man only did the right and natural thing in giving help.

But the man, swaying sideways, nearly lost his balance. He had calculated automatically the probable energy necessary to lift the weight; he had put this energy forth. He received a shock as though he had been struck, for the bag had no weight at all; it was as light as a feather. It might have been of tissue-paper, a phantom bag. And the shock was mental as well as physical. His mind swayed with his body.

"By jove!" cried the boy, strutting merrily beside him, hands in his pockets. "Thanks most awfully. This is jolly!"

The objectionable word was omitted, but the man scarcely heard the words at all. For a mist swam before his eyes, the street lamps grew blurred and distant, the drizzle thickened in the air. He still heard the wild, sweet song of the bird, still knew the west had gold upon its lips. It was the rest of the world about him that grew dim. Strange thoughts rose in a cloud. Reality and dream played games, the games of childhood, through his heart. Memories, robed flamingly, trooped past in his inner sight, radiant, swift and as of yesterday, closing his eyelids for a moment to the outer world. Rossetti came to him, singing too sweetly a hidden pain in perfect words across those twelve blank years: "The Hour that might have been, yet might not be, which man's and woman's heart conceived and bore, yet whereof time was barren . . ." In a second's flash the entire sonnet, "Stillborn Love," passed on this inner screen "with eyes where burning memory lights love home . . ."

Mingled with these—all in an instant of time—came practical thoughts as well. This boy! The ridiculous effort he made to carry this ridiculously light bag! The poignant tenderness, the awakened yearning! Was it a girl dressed up? The happy face, the innocent, confiding smile, the music in the voice, the

dear soft blue eyes, and yet, at the same time, something that was *not* there—some indescribable, incalculable element that was lacking. He felt acutely this curious lack. What was it? Who was this merry youngster? He glanced down cautiously as they moved side by side. He felt shy, hopeful, marvelously tender. His heart yearned inexpressibly; the boy, looking elsewhere, did not notice the examination, did not notice, of course, that his companion caught his breath and walked uncertainly.

But the man was troubled. The face reminded him, as he gazed, of many children, of children he had loved and played with, both boys and girls, his Substitute Children, as he had always called them in his heart . . . Then, suddenly, the boy came closer and took his arm. They were close upon the station now. The sweet human perfume of a small, deeply loved, helpless and dependent little life rose past his face.

He suddenly blurted out: "But, I say, this bag of yours—it weighs simply nothing!"

The boy laughed—a ring of true careless joy was in the sound. He looked up.

"Do you know what's in it? Shall I tell you?" He added in a whisper: "I will, if you like."

But the man was suddenly afraid and dared not ask.

"Brown paper probably," he evaded laughingly; "or birds' eggs. You've been up to some wicked lark or other."


The little chap clasped both hands upon the supporting arm. He took a quick, dancing step or two, then stopped dead, and made the man stop with him. He stood on tiptoe to reach the distant ear. His face wore a lovely smile of truth and trust and delight.

"My future," he whispered. And the man turned into ice.

They entered the great station. The last of the daylight was shut out. They reached the ticket-office. The crowds of hurrying people surged about them. The man set down the bag. For a moment or two the boy looked quickly about him to right and left, searching, then turned his big blue eyes upon the other with his radiant smile:

"She's in the waiting-room as usual," he said. "I'll go and fetch her—though she *ought* to know you're here." He stood on tiptoe, his hands upon the other's shoulders, his face thrust close. "Kiss me, father. I shan't be a second."

"You little beggar!" said the man, in a voice he could not control; then, opening his big arms wide, saw only an empty space before him.

He turned and walked slowly back to his flat instead of to the club; and when he got home he read over for the thousandth time the letter—its ink a little faded during the twelve intervening years—in which she had accepted his love two short weeks before death took her. 





(continued from page 48)

After the cannibalism scene, which Klice thought was tastefully done, he started to relax. No one would have recognized him in the motel. It must have been one of Weltbounder's perverse jokes, nothing more. But when the edge of the mirror swung into view, he felt his scalp begin to sweat under his hairpiece.

At an oblique angle, inside the gilt frame, he saw himself turn over, his face twisted in embarrassment and rage. The shot was frontal, the subject of his despair curled yet ironically growing as Weltbounder's camera zoomed in.

When the seizure gripped him, he bit his tongue furiously until it flipped over and stopped the cavity of his throat.

When Fitzgibbon saw his office again, it was empty. A full minute long, the first shot was dead on, not a shred of movement. Then Big Sid ushered in a man Fitzgibbon didn't recognize, a young man with the eager face of a jackal. The man sat in Fitzgibbon's chair and spun around while Big Sid beamed.

Fitzgibbon clutched his chair, as his internal organs began their rebellion.

Big Sid, a tiny man in a loud Madras jacket, switched on the lights when the screening ended. Using a single bony finger, he poked each producer for signs of life. When he was convinced they were dead, he got on the phone.

"Get your flack on this right away, Werner. I'll get the photographers. We'll release the day after the funerals... What? Oh, sure, we'll get the audience to sign disclaimers, no problem. We'll four-wall the shit out of it, like one of those family-and-bear numbers.

"By the way, this thing won't hurt nobody else, will it? Right. No, that's fine, we got plenty of producers. Anyway, they're too cheap to buy their own tickets."

That night Big Sid released the sad news to Rhoda Garrot and several other luminaries of the press. By the time the film was released, ticket lines were blocks long. 17

# OZ

(continued from page 51)

Nicol Williamson to Vinton's "claymation" creature.

Williamson would also be called upon to wear a pair of the ruby slippers, a point driven home to me when I visited the workshop of Oz costume designer Ray Hughes (*The Far Pavilions*). As I entered Hughes's workshop I was startled by the sight of six pairs of the famed slippers, including two in size 11½.

There was some question at first whether or not the Oz filmmakers could use the ruby slippers, since they were an invention of the MGM film. (Baum's Dorothy wears *silver* slippers, just like Diana Ross did in *The Wiz*.) But I have been assured by Disney execs that they have secured permission to use the more recognizable ruby shoes.

**O**n the second day, I visited the back lot where the Emerald City stood, or did not stand, since it is in ruins when Dorothy returns. It was a landscape of decay: collapsed domes, toppled columns, broken towers, inhabitants turned to stone. Fairuza Balk was standing by, talking to actor Michael Sundin, who plays Tik Tok. Murch, looking rather like a young Walt Disney in knee-high boots, a green jacket, and corduroy slacks, peered into a pair of video monitors. He looked healthy and relaxed, but I was allowed only a few minutes' time with him. When I asked him what happened on March 26, he

said simply, "Well, I was fired. They came to me and said, 'Walter, you are not going to do this film.' But I was rehired the next day."

Strolling with me through the ruins of the Emerald City, Murch characterized Oz as "a sequel to the side. The only real sequel would have to have been made with Judy Garland." He said, "Here we are forty-five years later, and the whole style of filmmaking has changed. So we're taking advantage of the changes, and we're hoping to avoid imitating the style of the original, which is unique."

What about the frightening elements in his script? "There are also frightening elements in the 1939 film," he pointed out. "Countless people say that *The Wizard of Oz* is one of the most frightening films they've ever seen, as well as the happiest. It's an odd mix: hope and fear."

Hope and fear are also, perhaps, the prevailing emotions of any first-time director, especially a director whose film will inevitably be compared to a classic like *The Wizard of Oz*. So it is perhaps understandable that my talk with Murch was brusquely curtailed, due in part to the intervention of the film's publicist, who was no doubt more concerned with the film and its director than with my getting a story. And it is perhaps a fact of life that reporters are often automatically perceived as hatchet men, hell-bent on turning rumor into ruined reputations.

But the truth is that not every journalist loves a disaster. Some of us delight even more in triumph—and that's what I hope this film will prove to be. Here in the midst of the eighties, magical places as magical as Oz are in very short supply. 17

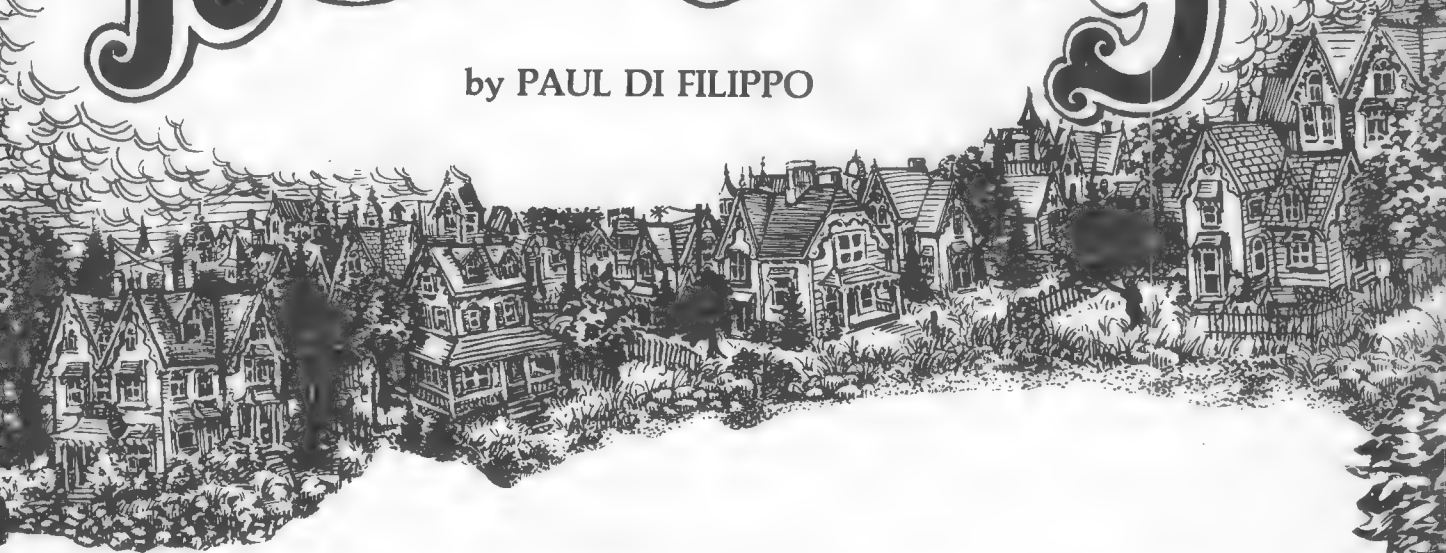
## Answers to the FANTASY FILM QUIZ

1. *A Trip to the Moon*
2. *The Avenging Conscience*
3. *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*
4. *Nosferatu*
5. *The Thief of Bagdad*
6. *The Lost World*
7. *London After Midnight*
8. *M*
9. *White Zombie*
10. *The Black Cat*
11. *The Evil Mind* aka *The Clairvoyant*
12. *She*
13. *One Million B.C.*
14. *The Jungle Book*

15. *The Curse of the Cat People*
16. *The Beast with Five Fingers*
17. *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms*
18. *Them!*
19. *Diabolique*
20. *This Island Earth*
21. *The Fly*
22. *Jason and the Argonauts*
23. *The Haunting*
24. *The Tenth Victim*
25. *Fahrenheit 451*
26. *Five Million Years to Earth* aka *Quatermass and the Pit*
27. *Asylum*
28. *Picnic at Hanging Rock*
29. *Carrie*
30. *Time After Time*

# RESCUING ANDY

by PAUL DI FILIPPO



*A tale of Blackwood Beach (the first, we hope, of many) — a town that Algernon himself would have loved. You'll have trouble finding it on the map of New England . . . and that's just as well, considering the inhabitants!*



**N**apoleon's ghost refused to play fair. Despite the entreaties and threats employed by Major Flood, it still persisted in misunderstanding the rules of the board game.

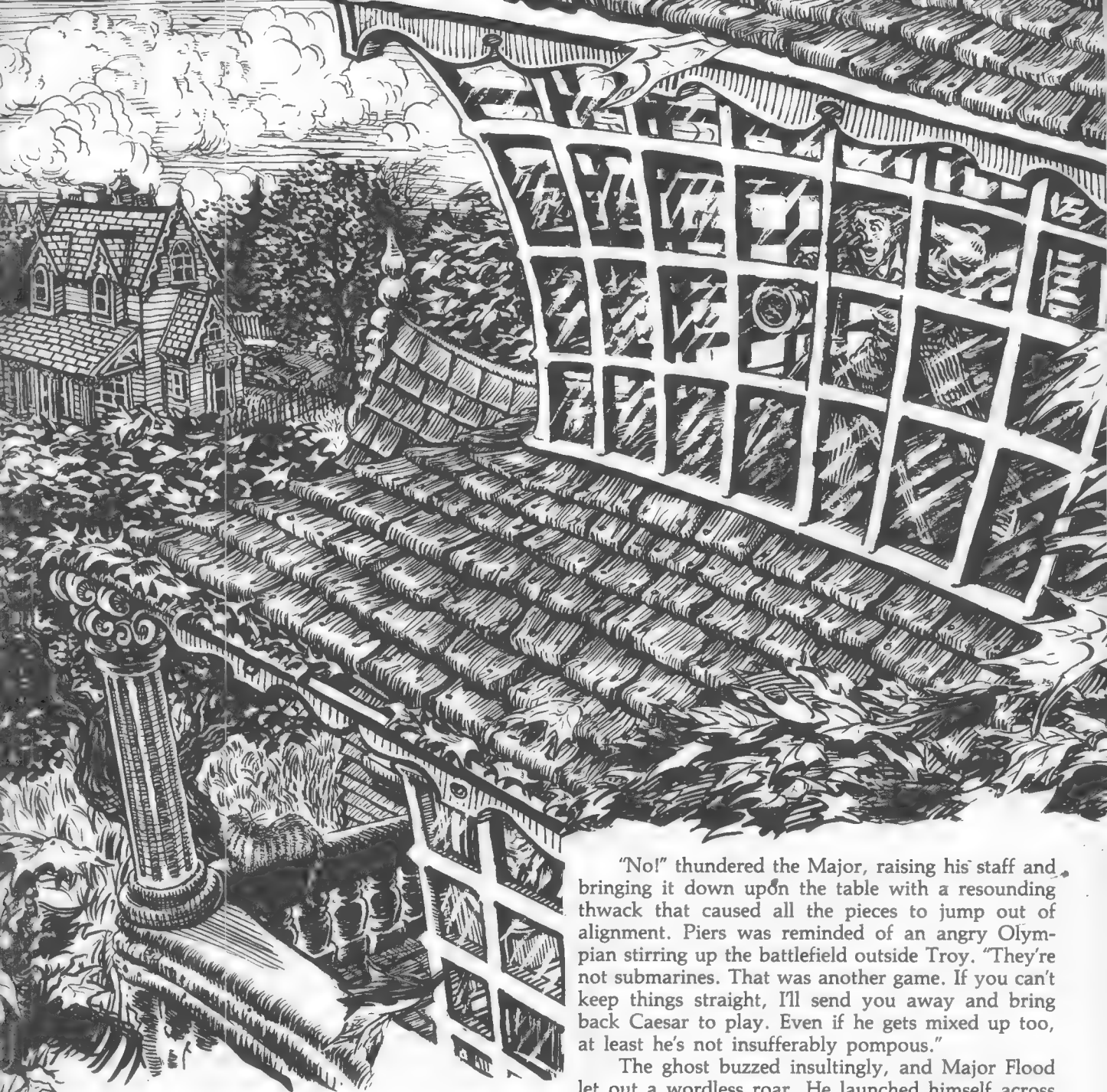
From across the large and cluttered room, flooded with August sunlight, Piers watched the argument with amused tolerance. Just two months ago, the whole affair would have struck him as bizarre and improbable, rather like seeing a horse atop a saddled man. But back then, he had been merely a jaded New Yorker, inured to instant death, garish spectacles, and a citizenry that ranged the gamut from eccentric to outlandish.

Now he lived in Blackwood Beach.

Things were much stranger here.

Piers rested his narrow rear on a big oak sideboard full of junk — a conch-shell whose apparently natural color and pattern was that of the American flag; a rusted flintlock pistol; an object the eye could not quite fasten on, which Major Flood claimed was a tesseract given to him by young Randy Broadbent. With his legs crossed at the ankles and arms folded across his chest, Piers enjoyed the sight of Major Flood arguing with his guest.

The Major was a bulky man, florid but pleasant, who always dressed in khaki, now exemplified by a bush jacket and shorts. (His response to Piers's polite inquiry as to where he had soldiered had been to wink slyly and say, "The War of Independence, boy. The only one worth waging, and one I'm still



fighting for all I'm worth." Further probing produced no more concrete answer.) He sat in a barrel-chair at the head of a long, polished table. His face was red as one of the good lobsters found in the waters off Blackwood Beach. He clutched a croupier's rake—which he had been using to move pieces—so tightly he seemed to be compressing its wooden handle. Midway down the table, an Avalon Hill strategy game was set up. The chair at the far end was occupied by a milky, mansized whorl of oily gas, looking something like a giant's greasy thumbprint on the air.

"God damn it, your royal stupid Eminence!" Flood shouted. "How many times do I have to tell you? Those red markers represent tanks. Land iron-clads! They cannot just roll blithely over the parts of the board that represent water. *L'eau! Comprenez?*"

The ghost replied in a buzzing which resembled French as it might be spoken by a praying mantis.

"No!" thundered the Major, raising his staff and bringing it down upon the table with a resounding thwack that caused all the pieces to jump out of alignment. Piers was reminded of an angry Olympian stirring up the battlefield outside Troy. "They're not submarines. That was another game. If you can't keep things straight, I'll send you away and bring back Caesar to play. Even if he gets mixed up too, at least he's not insufferably pompous."

The ghost buzzed insultingly, and Major Flood let out a wordless roar. He launched himself across the slick table in his eagerness to throttle Napoleon, and the gameboard blew off in a spray of cardboard hexagons.

Piers chuckled nervously and turned to ascend the elaborate staircase on his right.

Although he enjoyed nothing more than visiting his neighbor, he always felt a little queasy watching him wrestle with the insubstantial Emperor. The whole affair looked a bit too much like a scene from Bedlam, and Piers was still new enough to Blackwood Beach to occasionally doubt his own sanity.

On the landing halfway between floors, Piers passed a suit of armor. It seemed quite conventional, until one noticed it possessed a long articulated caudal tube, evidently for the wearer's tail.

Flood had given Piers the run of his house early in their acquaintance, and now Piers used the privilege to retreat to the widow's walk until the Major should cease his brawling.

In the square hot little room, with its windows on all four sides affording a grand view of the sea and countryside and town below, Piers paused. An archaic brass telescope on a wooden tripod occupied most of the space. Idly, Piers bent to the eyepiece and swung the glass out to sea.

Little Egg, the bald dome of rock a mile out into the Atlantic, popped into view. Piers studied its incommunicative face for a while, then trained the scope on Big Egg, a few degrees away. Both quite bland and featureless. Shifting his position, he brought the lens to bear on the rocky coast that stretched north of Blackwood Beach. Waves crashed with soundless fury against the tumbled, unpeopled boulders. The water was rough today. Why, look there—one wave seemed almost bold enough to touch the feet of that naked woman lying brazenly on the rocks—

Piers froze, as if captivated by Medusa. This was something new, at least to him. He had never seen this beautiful woman before, on the rocks or in town. Who could she be? And why had she picked such an inconvenient place to sunbathe? Surely she could have found privacy without venturing to such an inaccessible spit.

Piers studied her as closely as the instrument allowed. Her skin was dusky, her thick long black hair spread out like a fleece around her head. Her limbs were long and muscular, her breasts full and firm. From Piers's head-on angle, her face was obscured, but she had a nice expressive brow and a pretty pink line defined the part of her hair.

Piers watched her for ten minutes, but she never sat up or turned her face to him.

He noticed after a time a bundle of her possessions beside her. Only then did he believe she had not just climbed from the sea.

At last he broke away and returned downstairs. Major Flood sat on the floor. The chair the ghost had been occupying was a heap of kindling, destroyed in their fight. Flood looked up when Piers approached.

"Sorry about the ruckus," Flood said contritely. Then, with bemusement, "I wonder if I'd have better luck with someone more modern. But, damn it, all the great generals were pre-twentieth-century." He eyed Piers speculatively. "I don't suppose you'd reconsider—"

"No," Piers said. He was on good terms with the mercurial Flood now, and was afraid to alter their relationship by getting involved with the man's passion for simulated warfare.

Piers extended a hand and Flood took it. The heavy man got to his feet with surprising nimbleness.

"I've just seen something wonderful," Piers said. "A gorgeous woman tanning herself on the rocks."

"That's Andy," said Flood, bending over to adjust his olive knee socks. He added as an after-

thought, "She's not tanning herself. She's waiting to be ravished."

Piers's jaw dipped before he could control it. "I beg your pardon."

"I said, she's waiting to be ravished."

All Piers could summon up was two words: "By whom?"

"That I couldn't tell you. But I believe Doctor Frostwig knows her whole story. If you'd like me to call him and arrange a visit—"

Piers nodded agreement.

"Fine, I will." Flood had rearranged his rumpled attire to suit his stringent standards. Now he looked Piers straight in the eye.

"Would Grant or Lee be more amenable, do you think?"

Three months ago, Piers had ceased to need to work, broken the bond between his belly and his bankbook. A broker in Manhattan, he had overheard while half drunk in a noisy bar a conversation that enabled him to make a fortune trading in fishmeal futures. Once he had invested his profits at a suitably high interest rate and quit his job, he realized he wanted nothing more to do with New York. It was not his native city, that was Boston. He had few friends in Manhattan, and had come to dislike its uproar and grime and sundry subtle pressures. But neither did he wish to return to Boston, and live uncomfortably close to his domineering widowed father.

One day, riding the Amtrak train between the two poles of his indeterminate life, he spotted a weathered wooden roadsign that passed almost too quickly for him to interpret:

BLACKWOOD BEACH  
12 MILES

The name stuck in his mind for the rest of the trip, replaying itself like an insistent jingle. It seemed somehow to hint at a pleasant desuetude, a languorous decay, an atmosphere as far removed from the hurly-burly of New York as that of the Upper East Side was from Harlem.

When he arrived in New York, he immediately took his black Saab from its garage and headed north.

The town almost did not want to be found. When Piers finally located, after hours of hot driving, the sign he had seen from the train, he realized that it gave no direction as to which of two possible roads he should take.

Assuming from its name that the town fronted the shore, he headed east, toward the Atlantic.

The assumption was right, the choice wrong. The road petered out at an abandoned farmhouse, standing grey and desolate on a weedy lot, within sound of the breaking surf.

Only by taking the westerly road, which



**"That's Andy," said Flood.  
"She's not tanning herself.  
She's waiting to be ravished."**

wandered through the New England landscape like a sun-addled snake; did he eventually arrive at Blackwood Beach.

Like happiness, the town seemed approachable only through indirection.

Blackwood Beach occupied something of a natural amphitheater, with the restless sea serving as the great tragicomedy on the east. The gently sloping sides of the bowl were laced with meandering, tree-lined streets, connecting huge Victorian and Edwardian houses, all in more or less conspicuous stages of comfortable disrepair. The houses, exerting themselves like circus acrobats, had managed to toss a few of their comrades up over the lip of the wide but shallow bowl. These houses sitting up atop the ridge commanded the finest views.

It was one of these crest-riding old sentries that Piers knew he had to have. Something ineffably right about the town had drawn him into its mustily welcoming embrace.

Traveling the ridge road—labeled rather perversely with an antique wrought-iron street sign as Lower Avenue—Piers came upon a sprawling, flaking-white house, its lower windows boarded with plywood, a faded lawnsign proclaiming it FOR SALE. From the stained-glass portrait of a Kraken in its tower, to its warped porch floorboards, it was everything Piers wanted.

Within a week, he was living there, happy and relaxed. Two local carpenters—Ed Stout and his silent son, Jack—kept the place noisy during the day with repairs, so Piers took to exploring the town.

That was when he began to realize the kind of place his new home was. "Not ordinary" would be putting things in the most conservative light.

The events that led him to the realization were not dramatic taken separately, and allowed him to preserve an unconscious belief that one day he would be rendered a logical explanation for them all. The glinting object behind Welcome Goodnight's eyepatch, the chase through the hilly streets that Randy Broadbent gave in pursuit of the catlike thing, a strange phrase here, a half-glimpsed something there. He tried to ignore them at first. But they eventually mounted up to conclusive evidence that Blackwood Beach did not find it convenient to obey the same physical laws as the rest of the world.

The actions of Major Flood, his closest neighbor, were the most startling things he had so far witnessed. But that was perhaps only because the

Major was the sole citizen whose private life he was intimately familiar with. During the period when the Stouts had been working on his house, he had been invited by Flood to keep him company and share a drink. He had assented gladly, a bit lonely, unaware however of the other visitors the Major entertained.

Even these he had been able to rationalize, though.

But this woman lying on the rocks, waiting to be "ravished"—for some reason such a situation was too much to tolerate. All his incipient bewilderment had been crystallized into an irksome pearl.

He resolved before leaving Flood's that he would have the answer at least to this one mystery.

**T**he bobcat held Piers's gaze with its own unwavering one. Its head only inches from his, it snarled with silent yet malignant fury, its teeth twin rows of needlelike instruments of pain and mutilation.

Piers gently patted the dusty head of the stuffed and mounted animal, while he watched Doctor Frostwig's bony back. The Doctor was rummaging among some papers on his rolltop desk, muttering to himself all the while. Piers caught only snatches.

"Can't imagine ... How did it ever ... Why don't things ..."

Piers sat in the study of Doctor Frostwig's house on 13½ Staghorn Road. (Many of the houses in Blackwood Beach were numbered with fractions, not for any particular reason Piers could determine—such as subdivision of old lots—but merely to express a certain contrariness. In keeping with the spirit, yet striving to be modern, Piers had painted his mailbox with the legend:

3.14152... LOWER AVENUE

He had noticed approving glances from passersby, and felt he was fitting in.)

The Doctor's study, a dark and shuttered room lit by a single sixty-watt bulb, was filled with animals. A fine repast for generations of moths, the creatures occupied every niche. An owl held its wings outspread atop a sideboard filled with mice in various comic poses. A fox stalked unseen prey across the terrain of a couch. In one shadowy corner, Piers swore he could detect the shape of an adult gorilla. These were only a portion of the indoor wildlife.

Without warning, a bang resounded, and Piers jumped.

The Doctor turned from the desk whose top he had slammed shut.

"I can't find the damn magazine," Frostwig said. "But I'll manage without it. I'm not that senile yet. I still remember old friends like Professor Ramada, even if I can't recall every detail of his crackpot theory."

"Thank you for looking, Doctor," Piers said. He

watched as Frostwig lowered himself slowly into a chair facing his.

The Doctor was a collection of sinew and bones, outfitted in a baggy blue shirt with acid stains and grey pants. He was entirely bald, and his face resembled an ancient dry riverbed.

"Now then, Mr. Seuss. Exactly what would you like to know about Ramada and his daughter?"

Piers found himself slightly tongue-tied at the prospect of mentioning how he had spied on the nude woman. Using Frostwig's own words as a cue, he finally said, "Uh, I believe I once heard the Professor speak, and I was curious as to what he did nowadays. And his daughter, also. That is, if you know anything about her."

Frostwig eyed Piers as if he were a transparent mannequin stuffed with falsehoods. But he must have decided his intentions were honest, since he began speaking in an unreserved tone.

"The Professor does nothing these days, I'm afraid. He died a little over a year ago. Many people around here—the romantic fools, mostly—like to claim it was of a broken heart. But I suspect that falling twelve stories to the asphalt was what really did it."

"Suicide?"

"No, I don't believe so. Although I see how some could imagine it was. The Professor did have a pet theory that was much disparaged by his fellow faculty members. He taught zoology at Brown. He was on the top floor of the science library one day. Witnesses testify that he leaned out a window trying to examine a peculiarly speckled pigeon nesting on the ledge, when he lost his balance."

Piers knew the building, and could visualize the accident all too clearly. He quickly asked, "What was Ramada's theory, Doctor?"

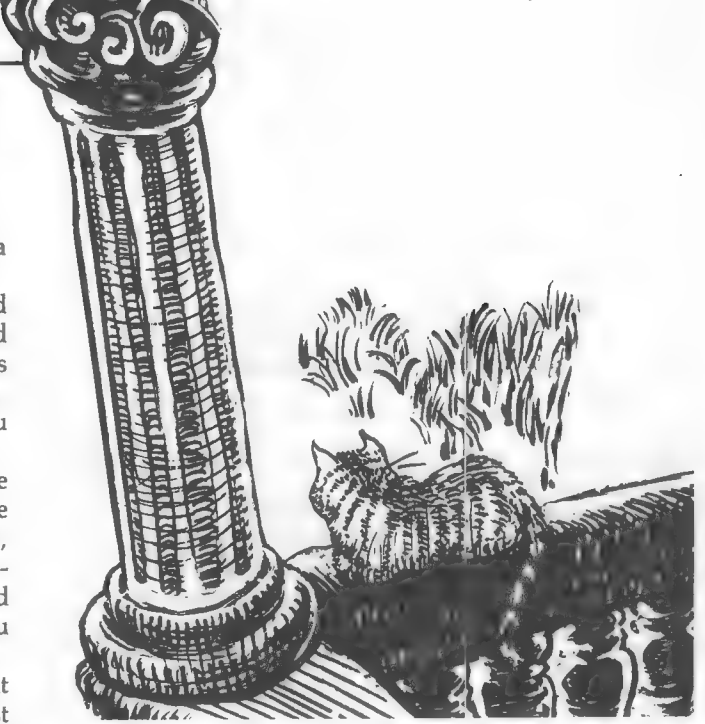
Frostwig steeped his twig-fingers. "That's why I was trying to find the magazine. I've been hunting for it since Flood called. You see, the Professor managed to have his ideas published in some scientific rag as a speculative article. Which of course just brought more scorn from his colleagues. Basically, they amounted to this:

"Ramada believed that Big Egg was hollow, with an underwater entrance. He went on to assert that a long-lived creature inhabited the hidden interior. He linked the creature to a legend the Narragansett Indians had of an aquatic diety. It is a fact that the Narragansetts used to make an annual pilgrimage to Blackwood Beach—of course long before there was any settlement by Europeans. In any case, this marine Bigfoot did not sit well with Ramada's peers. But he maintained his belief in it up to the end."

Piers slowly digested the information. Frostwig still had not provided any explanation for the daughter's behavior, and Piers prompted him.

"And Andy, his daughter—?"

"Lovely girl," Frostwig said. "She lost her



mother at an early age, and grew up something of a tomboy. She was naturally quite despondent over her father's death. I feel personally that she's brooded far too much over it. She hardly stirs from her house, except to shop for food. And—" Frostwig's severe gaze fell heavily upon Piers, who hung his head—"to lie sky-clad on the rocks, where, rumor has it, she is offering herself to the creature in some sort of obscure oblation, as if doing so could bring her father back."

"That's awfully sad," Piers said. "Not to mention a little daft."

Frostwig shrugged. "That's as it may be. As I stipulated, it's only a rumor. No one knows for sure what she's thinking, since she hasn't said. Perhaps she's merely trying to establish Blackwood Beach as the Saint-Tropez of New England. Remember also: we all work out our grief differently."

As Piers pondered the Doctor's last statement, Frostwig rose creakily and removed a giant pair of calipers from under his seat cushion. He advanced on Piers.

"Now, young man, if you'll just repay my favor by allowing me to take a few measurements."

Piers, overcome by surprise, sat helplessly while the Doctor ran the calipers along his skull, forearm, thigh, and other personal parts.

When the old man had finished, Piers stood to go. The Doctor accompanied him to the study door.

As they neared the shadowed corner where the gorilla lurked, Piers's eyes, now dark-adapted, played that odd trick—so familiar to myopics, but not generally available to those with normal vision, such as Piers—whereby an object seen at a distance recoheres upon closer examination into something entirely different.

Piers started, and would have paused for a longer look, but Doctor Frostwig hurried him out.

As he walked home, he realized that it had been the big fur coat on the glass-eyed man that had deceived him.

They met face to face for the first time in the flour-and-sugar aisle at Rackstraw's Market. Piers turned from examining an incomprehensible foodstuff—Kenyon's Johnnycake Meal—and found himself ensnared, melting into, almost subsumed by Andy's arresting profile.

He knew at that moment that he had to speak to her. For starters. Then he would perhaps—if the coast seemed clear—grab her manfully by the waist, toss her over his shoulder, and ride off on some adventitious winged horse, to a secluded castle where they could lie abed twenty-three hours out of twenty-four.

Piers was not a brawny fellow, and Andy verged on goddess-size, so the part about shouldering her weight gave him pause. Then instinct told him he could find the strength somewhere.

But for the moment, he neither spoke to nor abducted her, simply rested one elbow on the dusty varnished-wood shelf of Rackstraw's (circa 1910) Market and contemplated Andy's face.

Her features were vaguely Castilian, or Lebanese, or Greek—one of those alluring Mediterranean races Piers found hard to tell apart. Her forehead was as fine as Piers had first thought. Hazel eyes induced vertigo. A prominent nose only made one imagine how best to position one's own head so as to kiss her ripe unpainted lips.

Piers let his look wander south. Andy wore a men's shirt, white and knotted at the waist, flower-print cotton shorts, and sandals which laced up her inviting calves. She was filling a straw-handled basket methodically if absentmindedly with various staples. She tolerated Piers's adoration for perhaps thirty seconds before turning directly toward him.

Hastily, Piers straightened, realizing he must have looked like a regular layabout or lounge-lizard (market-lizard?). He opened his mouth to disburden himself of his now fully blossomed worship, but Andy spoke first.

"Do I know you, sir?"

Her plangent yet melodic voice drove Piers into more dangerous depths of confusion. He wanted to say something like, "Although you do not, dear lady, we were fated to meet from the second I glimpsed your thrillingly naked bosom from afar." Instead, however, he sputtered out. "No, but I—that is—my name is—"

"Please stop right there," she cut in sharply. "I can't listen to anything you have to say, no matter how well meant. My life is too mixed-up right now. I haven't even time for my old acquaintances, let alone new ones."

She turned to leave, and Piers's heart sank.

"Wait. I'm new in town. I just want to introduce myself."

She faced him again. "My father was a firm believer in propriety, sir. No idle chatting with strangers was what he advised me. And although

he's gone now, I still follow his advice. Please don't disturb a woman in mourning any further, or you'll make me mad."

Finished with him, Andy headed for soda-and-chips, with an irrepressible swaying of her hips. At the end of the aisle, she unexpectedly stopped and turned. An enigmatic smile contoured her lips.

"Perhaps when this is all over," she said, then was gone.

Piers was left speechless, and could not utter what he thought.

I'm not really a stranger—

And—

How can a body like that be in mourning?

The face in the mirror leered gruesomely. Its eyebrows shot up like those of a Groucho Marx on speed. The eyes themselves became crossed. The lips curled, the nostrils flared like those of a bee-stung bull. The total effect was one of a man simultaneously hearing a bad pun, sucking on a lemon, and having his ribs tickled.

Piers stopped mugging. He stood before his bathroom mirror, stomach pressed against the pedestal sink. He had been attempting to discern any incipient distortions of his countenance which perhaps might crop up in everyday social intercourse and frighten people. He had found none. In fact, he thought he had a rather pleasant face. Yet there must be some hidden flaw.

Why else would Andy react so coldly to him?

They had met two more times: once again in the market (silence), and once outside her house (a gabled and turreted monstrosity whose salient feature was an enormous window shaped like an eye within a pyramid, above the front door; there, his reception had been positively Borgian, as Andy made a motion indicating she would gladly slit his throat).

The whole affair so far gave Piers scant reason for hope. Despondent, he studied his uncontented features for the *n*th time.

A shock of nonaggressive brown hair fell across his brow. Tranquil blue eyes, an unassuming nose, a pleasantly well-defined jaw and chin. He saw no reason why such an assemblage should cause violent disgust. As for his body, all prior lovers had rated it at worst satisfactory.

The poor girl was mad not to at least talk to him. Her background, this crazy town—that was the only explanation. Obsessed with her father's death, she had no time for wholesome activities, but could only languish on the rocks, performing some arcane, totally useless penance for a death she had nothing to do with. A monomaniac, that's what she was. He was well shut of her.

Piers dressed and went downstairs to read the *Blackwood Beach Intelligencer* and enjoy his breakfast, his mind made up to drop all thoughts of

the infuriating woman.

His vow lasted until his third cup of coffee. Then, hating himself, he walked next door to Major Flood's.

Piers did not bother to knock, since the Major never answered. He simply went inside and through several cavernous, high-ceilinged rooms to the one where the Major entertained his spiritous opponents.

There he found the usual tableau of Flood facing a churning pool of mist.

"Vizzkey," implored the mist.

"No, no whiskey," Flood yelled. "Not until we finish the game."

"Vat var?" the ghost inquired desultorily.

"Meade versus Lee at Gettysburg. You get to take the part of one of your own generals. Should be no problem. Now, move."

Without direct intervention, pieces began to slide about the board. Flood's face assumed a look of grim concentration.

Piers left him to his game.

The barrel of the telescope was warm to his touch. Piers swung it with practised aim to the north. Soon he had captured Andy in his brass and glass contrivance.

It inflamed him beyond reason to watch her every day in this remote and intangible manner. He had refrained from visiting her on the rocks only because he knew with dismal certainty that she would only hate him even more. (But did she hate him now? There was that smile in the market—if she hated him life would not be worth living. Her granitic couch would serve to dash his brains out, as he hurled himself from the heights. Like father, like suitor.)

Piers's wild thoughts were suddenly truncated as neatly as by a guillotine. What was she doing? She had sat up, taken something from her pile of clothing. It looked as if her fingers were clasped around air. No, a transparent bottle with transparent contents. Oh my God. It wasn't—it was. She wouldn't—she would.

With the deliberate economy so evident in her public gestures, Andy began to coat her honey-colored body with protective baby oil.

Feeling like the most horrid voyeur, Piers watched her transform her upper body—arms, breasts, belly—into a shimmering paradise. When her hand strayed below her waist, Piers grew so agitated that he lost her from the restricted circle of the lens.

He stood erect, the telescope abandoned, a plan forming in his frazzled brain.

Randy Broadbent looked curiously ageless. Although supposedly only twelve, his fat face radiated a Buddhalike timelessness. Even his food-spotted t-shirt and bulging bib overalls could not detract from his air of eternal introspection.

Piers and the boy sat in the basement of the Broadbent home. Randy's parents were both at work.

The cellar was Randy's workshop. Except for one corner grudgingly ceded to a washer and dryer, the dank expanse was filled with a bench full of chemicals and glassware, a set of pre-nineteen-hundreds Encyclopedia Britannica, and other such objects as had at one time or another retained Randy's interest.

"Now let me get this straight," Randy said. He sat on a high workbench stool that put his eyes level with Piers's. "You will provide me with a wetsuit, which you want me to alter into some sort of sea-monster outfit."

"Correct," said Piers uneasily. "And don't forget the mask."

"Right. A mask to match. And all this is for Halloween. Which is two months away."

"Yes. But I'd like it as soon as possible."

Randy eyed Piers phlegmatically, as if reading his soul and preferring the synopsis. Piers thought he was about to refuse when he said, "A week okay?"

"Fine, wonderful," Piers babbled. He stood, relieved, and tried to make small talk. "What's this?" he asked, pointing to a cagelike apparatus.

"A matter transmitter," Randy said boredly. "But it's not perfected yet."

Piers chuckled accomodatingly. Ah, Youth! What wild flights of imagination. But the boy was a good craftsman. Piers had seen a soft-sculpture of Alexander the Great he had fashioned for Flood.

"Ah, I see you have a computer. I used to work with one, trading stocks."

Piers laid his fingers on the familiar keyboard. Randy said, "Be careful. That's not a normal machine. I've got some very sophisticated prognosticative software in there."

Piers started to smile. Without his having tapped a key, words began to scroll across the screen.

DON'T DO IT. IT'S DANGEROUS.  
YOU'LL BE SORRY.

Piers jumped back, as if the keyboard were electrified.

"Ha, ha," he said woodenly as sweat beaded his upper lip. "Good joke."

"I don't joke," said Randy. "And neither does it."

It had to be a day when the sea was calm. After going to all this trouble, Piers had no intention of letting heavy surf pound him against Andy's flat-topped boulder. At last one arrived. Piers left the house shortly after dawn, carrying the customized wetsuit and mask in a duffel bag he had formerly used to carry his racquet-ball outfit.

He had picked the suit up several days ago, paying Randy a fair sum. Alas that the boy had probably never gotten a chance to spend it. Piers



## The cold webbed hand clutching him by the ankle took him totally unawares.

had been as startled as the rest of the town to find the Broadbent home vanished one morning, water pipes cleanly sheared and visible in the empty pit from which even the foundation had disappeared. He recalled the matter transmitter and shuddered to think he had almost gone inside.

Piers did not really want to do what he was going to do. He felt truly small and mean. But what other choice did he have? He had to make Andy pay attention to him. There seemed no other way. And maybe, he thought in muzzy pop-psychiatric terms, he could rid her of her obsession by actualizing it.

Down by the sandy public beach, empty at this hour save for peeling park benches and rickety gazebo, Piers found a clump of perpetually leaning pines in which to change unseen. He stripped down to his undershorts and laid the suit out. Randy had done a good job, using epoxies and rubber and plastic to achieve a warty, scaled look, with serrated fins at elbows and calves. The kid had even attached gloves. The mask—open at the back and fastened with elastic—looked something like the Creature from the Black Lagoon.

Piers donned suit, mask, and flippers. The gasketed glass faceplate fit fairly well over his false face. A snorkel completed his gear.

Leaving his clothes amid the trees, Piers clumped clumsily down the beach and into the water.

As he began to swim north, he rehearsed his plan. He would discard his snorkel and diving mask while still unseen by Andy, as he floated out of sight. (He wouldn't need them to return, since the two of them would certainly walk off arm in arm.) After ditching the equipment, he would shoot up with the aid of a wave onto Andy's rock, uttering suitably grotesque noises. At this point, he foresaw several results. Andy fainted, or turned and fled, or threw herself at his feet. Whatever eventuated, she would be cured. He would have rescued her from her delusions.

In his ridiculous suit, Piers paddled along, head down, flippers kicking. Every once in a while, he stopped and risked a brief look to orient himself. Everything looked different from this perspective, the shapes of the jagged coast all changed. He hoped to spot Andy's recumbent form, though.

And, eventually, he did.

His plan worked perfectly—to a point. A few yards from Andy's rock, her lovely toes in view, Piers doffed his mask and let it sink. The snorkel

was likewise consigned to the sea. He snugged the clammy rubber face closer to his own, caught the next wave's impetus and was thrust forward.

The flippers made for a few awkward, scrambling moments, but finally he stood at Andy's feet, a menacing figure risen from the depths.

"Urgh—" he began, seeing Andy sit up.

The cold webbed hand clutching his ankle took him totally unawares. As his right foot was jerked back, he fell forward, almost atop Andy, who crabbed sideways just in time. He got his hands braced as he toppled, but his jaw still hit the stone, and things flickered briefly.

When he looked backward, half dazed, he saw the figment of Professor Ramada's theorizing.

Over seven feet tall, humanoid, with grey-green, barnacled, pebble-textured skin, it reared over Andy.

Without thought, Piers tried to tackle it.

It hardly rocked as he hit it. Its ankles smelled fishy. It bent and lifted Piers effortlessly above its head.

A brilliant flash, a pained grunt, and Piers was falling. He heard a splash just before he hit the rock and had every cubic centimeter of air knocked out of him.

He came to seconds later, beneficiary of Andy's tender ministrations. She held a camera by its strap and was hitting him repeatedly across the back. Each blow was accompanied by a word.

"You—" *Whack!*

"stupid—" *Whack!*

"frigging—" *Whack!*

"idiot!" *Whack!*

Piers turned playfully over, and she stopped. She sat back on her heels, her lovely haunches quivering with rage. Then she started to cry.

"Wha—" Piers croaked. "Whazzamatta?"

"You've ruined everything," Andy said furiously. "Weeks spent luring that thing here, wasted. Today might have been the day it finally emerged, so I could get a good picture of it and prove my father's theory."

Piers sat. His body insisted that every bone was broken. "You gotta picture," he managed.

"Oh, yes," she said through snuffles. "A fine picture, with you looking so obviously fake. Everyone will think the real one is a hoax too. And take that frigging mask off."

Piers did so. Andy had ceased to snuffle.

"I love you," Piers said.

Andy smiled cruelly. "If you love me, then go bring that creature back."

Piers thought a minute. He began to crawl off the rock and into the waiting area.

The hand on his ankle this time was warm and soft. Piers stopped, and looked back.

Andy said, "What is your goddamn name anyhow?" **17**

# Jungle Eyes

*There was trouble at home—  
and his only hope lay outside, among the beasts of darkness.*

by DARRELL SCHWEITZER

**H**is father had been screaming for some time. There were already tears on his mother's face when Peter sat down to dinner. He was eleven years old that summer, and he couldn't understand what his parents were fighting about. The rage in both of them built up as inexorably, as invisibly as a storm in a night sky. He could only sit there helplessly, glancing from one parent to the other, trying to pretend nothing was happening.

But it had always been like this, as long as he could remember.

"Please," he said finally. "Please stop it."

"Shut up, you little shit!" his father snapped.

"You shut up, will you?" his mother said. "That's no way to talk in front of your son."

"I'll talk however I want," his father said, completely ignoring him now, all attention directed back to his mother. "Goddamned little shit!" He pounded the table with his first, knocking over Peter's glass. For an endless silent instant, milk poured onto the floor.

"You bastard!" his mother screamed.

"It's my goddamned house—" yelled his father.

"That's about as much of you as I can take!"

"—and I'll talk any way I goddamned want."

Peter couldn't think of anything to say. He only wanted to make them stop hurting each other, but he didn't know how.

With a sigh his father fell silent and sat back in his chair, sweat glistening on his face.

"Peter, you'd better go to your room," his mother said.

He went, taking his plate with his hamburger and french fries, trying very hard not to cry in front of his parents. When he was upstairs, the door to his room closed behind him, he could still hear every word they said. Before long they were both screaming again.

He ate a few of the french fries, but he suddenly

wasn't very hungry and left the hamburger on the windowsill. He stretched out on his bed, paging through an already familiar issue of *Jungle Comics*, his favorite. He tried to read it again, but couldn't keep his attention on it. Putting the comic aside, he turned out the light. In the darkness, his tears began to come.

And then the growl came from the window.

He looked up. A sleek, dark shape moved there. Two eyes blinked, stared. Yellow eyes with vertical slits in them.

A pink mouth flashed open, exposing fangs.

It was Dkima, the Black Leopard. Peter knew him. Dkima was Jungle Man's messenger. He had come many times.

Down below, they were still screaming. Dishes crashed.

Suddenly the boy was alone in his room. The windowsill was empty. There was only the wind, ruffling the pages of the comic book.

"Wait," he whispered. "Don't go without me."

He went over to the window, raised the screen, and looked out. The night was dark and moonless, the stars clear, unwavering. The lighted windows of neighboring houses stared back at him like the eyes of jungle animals.

"Don't go."

There was a branch he could reach from the window. He leaned out, grabbed it, then swung himself free of the house. Once, in a happier time, his father had applauded his climbing and said he was part monkey.

Another dish broke. His mother was sobbing.

The tree had two trunks. He worked his way around to the farther one before climbing down, careful not to scrape branches against the side of the house.

He dropped to the ground, landing in a crouch, falling over backward. He sat there at the base of



the tree, listening. The words were unintelligible now, but both voices sounded hurt, furious.

He turned and looked around him, seeing clearly now with *anoupa*, the secret jungle vision, something Jungle Man taught to all his followers. He saw the towering vine-laden trees of the tropic forest, and the eyes, the luminous eyes, all around, unblinking. Birds shrieked in the branches. Far away a lion roared.

He couldn't see Dkima, but in the jungle, in the night, nobody could. The Messenger moved swiftly, soundlessly, only his eyes visible among the many others, in the endless jungle.

Peter got up and scurried across the yard to where the bushes began, then got down on hands and knees and crawled where grown-ups could never follow, through a familiar tunnel of curving branches, along the old white fence, behind the tangled masses of raspberry and honeysuckle.

He came face to face with an owl, swaying on a thin branch. It blinked, screeched, and took off, its wings whirring, a grey blur swooping low across the lawn.

Still the voices came from the house. They were only tones now.

The eyes were all around him. The dark, hunched shapes of animals paced back and forth, stalking one another beneath the lofty trees.

Where the fence came to a corner, he had dug a hole, long ago, when he was eight. He could still crawl through, under the fence.

Beyond was a vacant lot, high with weeds, where elephants stood asleep like black mountains, their ears gently flapping in the breeze. Grasses swayed. He moved slowly, briars catching his pants. Thistles rattled together.

When he came to his fort, the leopard was waiting, seated by the entrance, unblinking. His fort was an apple tree, bent horizontal by a storm, overgrown with vines. He had spent long hours weaving sticks and more vines into the walls of the enclosure beneath the tree.

He pulled aside the vines and crawled inside. The dirt floor was bare and dry. He could see out through the walls. He could see the stars and the thousand eyes, but no one could see in. No one could see him.

It was his favorite place. Sometimes he sat there on summer afternoons with his comic books. Sometimes he crouched around a dying campfire with his faithful band of Ugombu warriors, as they plotted the hunt of the antelopes that grazed in the grassy fields. The leopard would walk among them, growling, licking its fangs.

Now, in the darkness, he could barely see their faces, their feathered headdresses, their wide eyes. They had been waiting for him. They knew why he had come. He tried to be brave, to hold back his tears.

The wind rattled the walls of the fort.

"Have courage, Little Hunter," one of them said softly.

"I will."

He spat in the dirt and began to trace signs with his finger. The Ugombu watched, fascinated. They knew that he alone shared the deepest secrets of Jungle Man—and that he would only resort to them when he needed one thing more than anything else in the world.

When the magic figure was complete, he spat again, giving it life. He spoke the magic words. The warriors covered their ears and averted their eyes. Then all of them waited, listening to the wind, which sometimes, even yet, brought the shrill, garbled sounds of voices raised in anger.

Then there was a tall man crouching in front of him, stooped beneath the low ceiling of vines.

The boy gazed intently at the newcomer, at the wide red eyes set in a long, dark face. The man wore a bone in his hair, a necklace of teeth over his rawhide cloak, an ivory pin in one nostril. He carried a long, broad-headed spear, holding it just below the head. The shaft stuck out through the vines. On his shield was painted the skull of a lion.

Even Jungle Man called on this one only in times of greatest danger.

"Young Hunter," the man said, in a deep, soft voice, whispering like the wind, "I am he who walks in the great forest by night. Even the lion is silent at my passing. The bravest warriors tremble when I am near. The spirit of *Umjala*, the jungle itself, is within my heart. It is swifter than the cheetah, mightier than the elephant, more cunning than the snake. I know why you have summoned me. Shall I do what I alone can do? Shall I bring silence to the place of discord?"

"Yes," the boy said. "Help me."


The other was gone. Peter broke into a sweat, filled with anticipation, with joy and terror.

He looked out through the vines, and a minute later saw the lights of the house going out, not one by one as if someone were flicking switches, but slowly and all at once, as if a huge cloak were being draped over everything. Then the helpless, hopeless dread came back. He started to cry.

"No!" he shouted. "I didn't understand! I—"

He looked around for his Ugombu warriors. The fort was empty. Only the black leopard sat in the doorway, yawning, its teeth gleaming. He crawled past it, scrambling through the bushes. He ran onto the lawn.

"No! Wait! I was only trying to help! Please . . . don't hurt them . . ."

The owl hooted from a bush at the other end of the yard, then stopped. There was only silence, and the boy stood shivering in the night that was suddenly cold; and the house was completely dark; and the eyes, the jungle eyes, and the hunched, swift shapes were all around him. 



# Rod Serling's

*The series featured classic tales and celebrated writers – but even from the start, it was the directors who ran the show.*

# Night Gallery

by J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI and KATHRYN M. DRENNAN

*Night Gallery*, the tv movie, had been a ratings success. That was all the convincing NBC needed to order a series from Universal Studios based on the same concept. The network's enthusiasm was tempered, however, because this would be an anthology series, a rare species of television by that time. Perhaps for this reason, NBC made an initial order of only six one-hour episodes, and scheduled them as part of their new *Four in One* concept.

*Four in One* was the umbrella title for four NBC "miniseries" that would run six weeks each on Wednesday nights during the 1970-71 tv season. *McCloud* would air first, followed by *San Francisco International Airport*, *Rod Serling's Night Gallery* (as it was now officially called), and finally *The Psychiatrist*. *Night Gallery* was the last to go into production.

Serling agreed to continue as on-camera host of the series, and to write his own pointed, frequently witty introductions to the two or three separate stories shown in each hour. And though he would not write all of the stories, as he had in the pilot movie,

his scripts would dominate this first season—eleven of the fourteen segments were to be his.

Although Serling owned the *Night Gallery* concept, he didn't seek the role of producer or executive producer, nor insist they put in writing his rights to creative control. He assumed there would be no need for that—an assumption he would later regret.

The job of producing the series went to a veteran Universal producer-writer-director, Jack Laird. Born in Bombay, Laird had begun his career as a child actor in silent films. Later, as a young man, he'd continued to land roles in tv and film before finally abandoning acting in the late 1950s for work on the other side of the camera. His pre-*Night Gallery* credits included *Have Gun—Will Travel*, *Ben Casey*, *The Alfred Hitchcock Hour*, *Bob Hope Chrysler Theater*, and *The Psychiatrist*, on which he served as producer.

Laird's initial task on *Night Gallery* was to select the creative team that would form the core of the series, drawing from the ranks of those under contract to Universal or otherwise working regularly with the studio. One

of the first people he contacted was artist Tom Wright, who had previously worked with Laird as a visual design consultant. Laird reached him in Las Vegas on the set of a James Bond movie and asked Wright if he wanted to do the paintings that Serling would use to introduce each *Night Gallery* story. Intrigued by the challenge, Wright agreed immediately.

For the job of art director, Laird selected Joe Alves.\* They had worked together on *The Psychiatrist*, and Alves had also helped out on the original *Night Gallery* movie. Alves, who later earned an Oscar nomination for his production design work on *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and directed *Jaws 3-D*, now recalls his three seasons on *Night Gallery* as "one of the most fun times in my life, and one of the most mentally stimulating."

From the very beginning, Alves and most of the series' directors strove to give each segment a distinctive look—one that would set them apart from

\*For a couple of first season segments, Sidney Litwack also worked as an art director on *Night Gallery*.

each other, and set the series as a whole apart from other television shows. This point is important to remember when the inevitable comparisons are made between *Night Gallery* and *The Twilight Zone*. Where the latter was a series built on dramatic irony, stylistic writing, and vivid characterizations—it was very much, in short, a *writer's* show—*Night Gallery* was much more a *director's* show. While some excellent writing was done for *Night Gallery* by Serling and others, the series was primarily a showcase for mood and aesthetics, a forum for directors and others who created the look and feel of the series.

Given this emphasis, Alves played a critical role as art director and production designer. "Production design isn't just building sets," he explained. "It's totally coordinating the visual look of the picture. That includes not only sets and the dressing of the sets, but also close work with the costume designer and the special effects people, as well as scouting locations."

Of course the job also meant working closely with the directors. "What was most frustrating about the first season," Alves recalled, "was that Jack wanted to use a different director on each segment. This meant that each week I would have a two- or three-segment show to deal with, and two or three directors. I would have to discuss their views on what they envisioned, then show them what was available, and go over what I could do with the existing time and budget."

Although more than two dozen directors would work on *Night Gallery* during its three seasons, over half of the segments bear the imprint of just five talented men. Laird brought three of these directors over from *The Psychiatrist* series: actor-director Jeff Corey, who directed ten segments as well as acting in the premiere show; director-writer Gene Kearney, who directed nine and wrote eleven after joining the series in its second season; and producer-director-writer Jerrold Freedman (the creator of *The Psychiatrist*), who directed six and wrote one.

Laird more or less inherited the fourth director of this group. John Badham, who subsequently became famous for directing such movies as *WarGames* and *Blue Thunder*, had worked on the *Night Gallery* movie as associate producer. Badham joined the series in its second season, and his six segments represent some of his first directorial work.

The fifth member of this group was far and away the most prolific. Jeannot Szwarc, who later made his mark directing such films as *Jaws 2*, *Somewhere in Time*, and *Supergirl*, had worked with both Laird and Serling on *The Bob Hope Chrysler Theater* as an associate producer. He started his *Night Gallery* directing with "The Little Black Bag," and by the time the series had ended had done a total of twenty-four segments. Serling did not hesitate to hail the young French-born director as "brilliant."

### **"What was most frustrating was that Jack wanted to use a different director on each segment."**

"I loved *Night Gallery*," Szwarc said. "It was like home for me. I had a natural affinity for the show." What appealed to him most—aside from the chance to work with Laird and Serling, both of whom he liked and respected greatly—was the unusual literary bent of the series.

From the very first season, *Night Gallery* relied heavily on nineteenth- and twentieth-century science fiction, fantasy, and horror stories. Half of the segments that first season, and nearly two-thirds of *all* the segments across all three seasons, were based on short stories by such writers as August Derleth, H.P. Lovecraft, Manly Wade Wellman, Algernon Blackwood, C.M. Kornbluth, Clark Ashton Smith, and A.E. van Vogt, among many others. Although Serling and Laird had many differences over *Night Gallery*, they shared a love for the literature of the fantastic. That common interest was a major factor in shaping the series.

In short, *Night Gallery* was the rarest of rare birds—an anthology show in which each hour episode was broken up even further into multiple stories (as the new *Twilight Zone* series on CBS will be), many of them based on classic genre literature, and often directed in styles not typical of network television. For these reasons, as Szwarc and others confirm, NBC never really understood the show.

"A pair of mind-blowing chillers" was the studiously hip description the network used to promote the premiere of Rod Serling's *Night Gallery*

on December 6, 1970. Surprisingly enough, neither of the two segments chosen for that opening show was written by Serling.

Instead, the series opened with "The Dead Man," based on a Fritz Leiber story and scripted and directed by Douglas Heyes, who had been a director on *The Twilight Zone*. This grim but well-executed story of a doctor (Carl Betz) trying to cheat death with a bizarre experiment in hypnosis was followed in the second half-hour by a darkly humorous story called "The Housekeeper." Directed by John Meredith Lucas, the script was written by "Matthew Howard"—pseudonym for Douglas Heyes.

Heyes, who would only write three segments for the series, was as surprised as anyone to find his scripts opening the series back-to-back. Each segment of *Night Gallery* was done independently, with no thought by the directors or writers as to what other segment it might be paired with.

That there was a second segment by Heyes at all that season was almost an afterthought. "I ran into Jack Laird after he had already asked me to do 'Dead Man,' and at the time we didn't know whether or not there was going to be a writers' strike," Heyes recalls. "I happened to have a script ready that I had written for no particular reason. I had just thought of it, and wrote it down, and had it around for about a year, not knowing what I was going to do with it. So with the strike imminent, I said, 'How would you guys like to have a script that's already written?' They said great, and I gave them 'The Housekeeper.'"

The story concerns a man trying to replace the soul of his cold but beautiful wife with that of a more congenial person—no matter how many people he has to kill in the process. Heyes felt at the time that the final line of the script as he had written it—"How often, my God, how often?"—was not strong enough. "Then Larry Hagman [who stars in the episode] suggested a tag line to me when I came on the set, to see if I would buy it," Heyes said. The line Hagman suggested was, "Until we get it right."

"I bought it!" Heyes said, laughing. "I thought it was very good. So that's the line that's in it now."

The opening show received mixed reviews, but on the whole they were more positive than negative. Cruising the rarified air of modern telephilosophy (on wings of questionable syn-

tax), the Hollywood trade paper *Variety* commented:

Rod Serling's two-in-one entry (and sometimes three) in NBC's "Four-In-One" series offers some complex numerology for a concept that has been tried with mixed results previously. Apparently the web has been giving ear to the McLuhan creed that video is a non-linear medium and programming should be more free-form and less blocked-out. Whether the great telemajority is ready to leave the security of traditional schedules for the brave new world of an anthology of Gothic suspense playlets is to be told in the Nielsens.

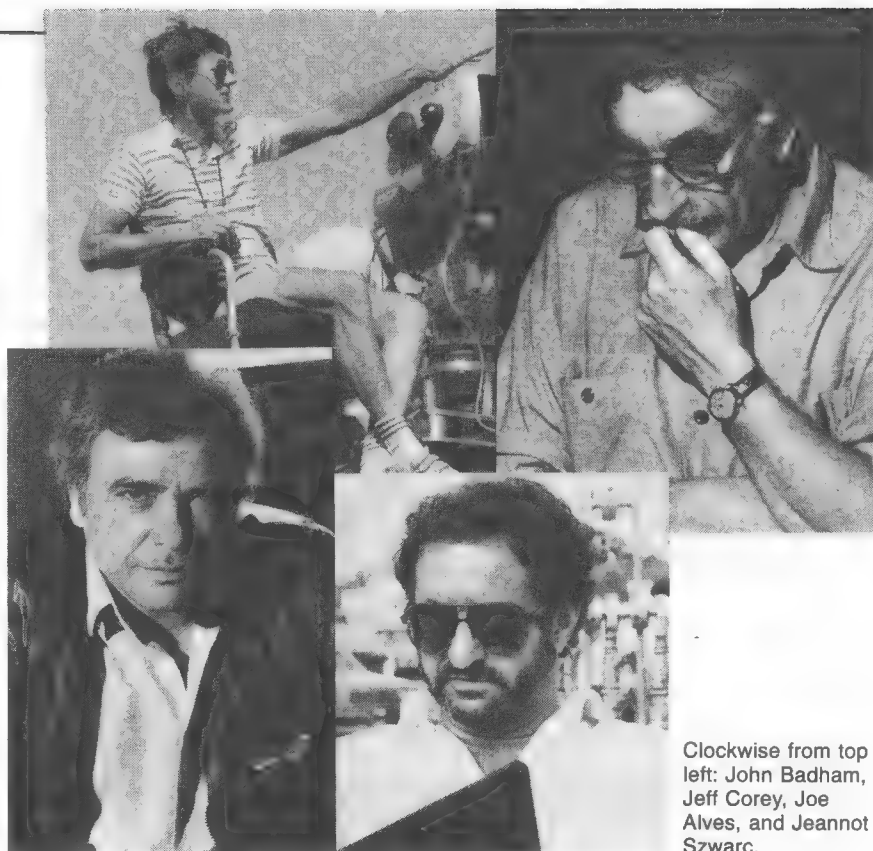
The second week of *Night Gallery* was highlighted by the production of "The Little Black Bag." This Rod Serling script, based on a classic and much-anthologized C. M. Kornbluth short story, concerns the tragic results that ensue when a futuristic doctor's medical bag is accidentally sent through time to the 1970s. As directed by Jeannot Szwarc, Serling considered it one of his favorites.

Although he had no direct involvement in casting, Serling was especially pleased with the casting of Burgess Meredith, whose talents he greatly admired. In fact, both here and again in a third season *Night Gallery*, "Finnegan's Flight," Serling wrote two excellent showcases for Meredith's talent to stand beside the classic *Twilight Zone* episodes he had written for the actor a decade earlier.

"I am very grateful to Rod Serling," Meredith later said. "He provided me with several of the best scripts I ever had the luck to perform. Year after year, Rod used to have a part for me every season, and every one of them extraordinary."

Both established and neophyte performers profited from the show's exposure during that second night. "Room with a View," written by Hal Dresner from his own short story (published in *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine*), is a sardonic piece that relies heavily on the actors to carry it. In this segment, veteran actor Joseph (Dr. No) Wiseman, as a bed-ridden man bent on murder, was ably matched by a young actress appearing in her first Hollywood production—Diane Keaton.

"She had come from New York," explained Jerrold Freedman, the director of the segment, "and I was known for breaking in new people—new directors, cameramen, editors, everybody. So Monique James, then head of cast-



Clockwise from top left: John Badham, Jeff Corey, Joe Alves, and Jeannot Szwarc.

ing at Universal, came over and said 'We have this new actress who's just come to town, and she's really going to be great. I want you to meet her.' That meeting was all it took, and Keaton was hired.

The final segment of the second episode, written by Serling, is probably the weakest of the three. "Nature of the Enemy," with its moon-walking monster mice, gave Joseph Campanella little more to do than react to the idea of a really big mousetrap on the lunar soil—a denouement that director Allen Reisner dragged out far longer than necessary.

The third week started off with "The House," which Serling based on a story by French writer André Maurois. This segment, which starred Joanna Pettet, is a haunting exploration of a woman's recurring dream. It was the first of three segments directed by actor John Astin, perhaps best known for his role as Gomez Addams on *The Addams Family*.

Also aired that third night was the excellent "Certain Shadows on the Wall," based on a classic American ghost story by Mary E. Wilkins-Freeman. Serling's deft translation of the story to script was aided by an especially strong cast and good direction. The director was Jeff Corey. Though a respected actor for many years, Corey was new to television directing, and this was only his second directorial effort. But he didn't hesitate in deciding what approach to take.

"If you do 'Certain Shadows' with Rachel Roberts, Agnes Moorehead, and Louis Hayward," he said, "then you're almost obliged to come in for close-ups and show those kind of Victorian faces, and the strange and eerie house." The result was an appropriately moody and claustrophobic piece.

For helping to make the segment successful, Corey gives credit to the man who created the shadow of Moorehead that remains long after her character has died.

"They had a wonderful artist who came in and painted that marvelous, ephemeral shadow," Corey recalls. "You'd have to go up to it, even though you knew it was painted, to ascertain that it *was* painted, because it absolutely looked like Aggie's shadow. It was amazing."

With show three, the series reached the halfway mark of its trial run—and the end of 1970—with great hopes for the future. The following weeks would bring further achievements mixed with some major disappointments. Most significantly, they would see the airing of the Emmy-nominated "They're Tearing Down Tim Riley's Bar," one of *Night Gallery's* most memorable segments.

• NEXT: THE DAY THEY FIRED STEVEN SPIELBERG

A special thanks for material in this series to Universal Studios and Jim Benson.

# Rod Serling's *Night Gallery*

*Continuing our exclusive guide  
to the series that carried on the 'Twilight Zone' tradition—  
complete with Rod Serling's opening narrations.*

## THE DEAD MAN

Broadcast December 6, 1970  
Teleplay by Douglas Heyes, based on  
the short story by Fritz Leiber  
Directed by Douglas Heyes

Dr. Max Redford (Carl Betz), Dr. Miles Talmadge (Jeff Corey), Velia Redford (Louise Sorel), John Fearing (Michael Blodgett), Minister (Glenn Dixon)

*"We welcome you, ladies and gentleman, to an exhibit of art. A collection of oils and still lifes that share one thing in common—you won't find them in the average salon or exhibition hall of an art museum. Painting number one. Its title: 'The Dead Man.' An interesting meeting between flesh and bone, between that which walks and that which (you should excuse the expression) gets buried. So we submit for your approval this frozen moment of nightmare, placed on canvas."*

Dr. Redford, head of his own clinic, has invited his old friend, Dr. Talmadge, for a visit. When Talmadge arrives, he finds only one patient: young John Fearing, asleep on an examining table. Fearing appears extraordinarily healthy, a perfect specimen. But moments later he suddenly exhibits the physical symptoms of endopulmonosis, followed by Werblin's Disease—then returns to perfect health.



Louise Sorel gets a chilling embrace from Michael Blodgett.

The symptoms were not faked; Fearing is sensitive to psychological suggestion to an unimaginable degree. When hypnotized and told he has a disease, he truly has it. Redford had called up the symptoms through a pre-arranged posthypnotic signal, a coded tapping on his desk. Now Redford wants to go a step beyond: to conquer death. But the only immediate conquering is being done by Fearing. Programmed for absolute health and form, a virtual Greek God, he is having an affair with Velia, Redford's wife. Red-

ford tolerates it; it's the only temptation he has to keep Fearing around.

At last comes the final test of Redford's experiment. He taps his pencil twice, then once. Fearing's life-signs stop. Two more taps, and rigor mortis sets in. Talmadge, concerned, tells Redford to pull him out of it, it's too dangerous. Redford agrees. He taps three times, then once more. Over and over, Nothing. Fearing is truly dead. Velia, hysterical, accuses her husband of doing worse than killing him. She believes that his mind is still alive inside a dead (and shortly buried) body.

A year later, Talmadge returns. The clinic is in disrepair. Velia is a wreck, having never quite recovered from the shock of Fearing's death. Redford is also going downhill fast. He has called in Talmadge to accept his notes, and a statement acknowledging his role in Fearing's death. It was, Redford says, subconsciously deliberate; the signal was supposed to be three taps and two taps, not three and one.

Velia overhears and rushes, hysterical, into the cemetery. Before they can reach her, she gains Fearing's tomb and raps hard on the coffin, three and two, three and two.

Talmadge, who fell behind, hears screams. He arrives at the tomb to see an insane Velia sitting beside the strangled body of Dr. Max Redford. And the fingers clutching Redford's throat belong to the dead, rotted body of John Fearing.



## THE HOUSEKEEPER

Broadcast December 16, 1970  
Teleplay by Matthew Howard  
(pseudonym for Douglas Heyes)  
Directed by John Meredyth Lucas

Mr. Acton (Larry Hagman), Miss Wattle (Jeannette Nolan), Carlotta (Suzy Parker), Miss Beamish (Cathleen Cordell), headwaiter (Howard Morton)

*"Something on the abstract side, to annotate that which is not abstract at all. Greed, avarice, and man's constant hunger to change what he doesn't like, by whatever means. Said means in this case being a little science mixed with a little black magic. Welcome, if you will 'The Housekeeper.'"*

Miss Beamish, head of an employment agency, calls in the frumpy, elderly Miss Wattle for a special assignment. A Mr. Acton has requested a poor, funny-looking old lady with a good heart, "someone no one else would want. An old bag." Miss Wattle fits the criteria precisely.

Acton appears to be a kindly character with tremendous sympathy for her situation. He can see how she could feel cheated, could envy beautiful, wealthy women. Over lunch, he explains that his own beautiful, wealthy wife Carlotta has a heart the size of a peanut. She is selfish, ungrateful—and contemplating divorce.

Acton offers Miss Wattle a deal: using ancient books and formulae, he can perform a personality transplant. Her mind will be in Carlotta's body. Without too much cajoling, she agrees. To prepare, she must study Carlotta's picture and show up in Acton's laboratory at exactly nine o'clock. At nine o'clock, Carlotta is in the lab announcing her divorce, when the door opens, Miss Wattle enters, and through the use of a frog as transformer Acton accomplishes the transplant.

Acton eliminates Miss Wattle's body. Miss Wattle, now in Carlotta's body, begins having second thoughts—not only about murder, but about Acton. She doesn't care for the idea of being his wife, without a proper marriage and all. So she announces her intention to divorce him—and leave him not a penny.

But before she can leave, she finds another frumpy old housekeeper at the door, holding her picture, a frog at the ready. Another transplant occurs. Now



Larry Hagman and Suzy Parker.

in the old body, Acton advancing with a needle, she cries out, "How often? Dear God—how often?"

"Until we get it right," Acton says with a shrug.

## ROOM WITH A VIEW

Broadcast December 23, 1970  
Teleplay by Hal Dresner,  
from his short story.  
Directed by Jerrold Freedman.

Mr. B. (Joseph Wiseman), Nurse (Diane Keaton), Lila (Angel Tompkins), Charles (Morgan Farley), Chauffeur (Larry Watson)

*"Good evening, and welcome to Night Gallery, a potpourri of paintings slightly a tilt and left of center. Case in point, this canvas here—a bedroom, but with all the cheer and warmth of a crypt. Beneath the paint and the patina is an ingredient called jealousy. Color it monstrous green, and call the picture 'Room with a View.'"*

Mr. B. is a wealthy older man confined to his bed but not cut off from the world, thanks to his binoculars. With them he peers out through his bedroom window at the courtyard below, where his nurse and his chauffeur are enjoying an intimate moment together before she heads upstairs toward her patient.

Alone with her, Mr. B. probes into her relationships, her feelings toward men. In the midst of this, his attractive young wife Lila stops in briefly before leaving for town—or so she says. She treats him with impatience and contempt. After her departure, the two return to the subject of men—Vic the chauffeur in particular, whom the

nurse plans to marry in July. Mr. B. has heard about her sometimes violent jealous streak; once, he knows, the nurse injured a woman she thought was flirting with her fiancé.

As they talk, Mr. B. casually toys with his binoculars—and sees his wife meet the chauffeur in the courtyard. He watches as they move to the chauffeur's room for what is obviously one session in an ongoing adulterous affair.

Setting the binoculars down, Mr. B. assures his nurse that her jealous streak is nothing to be concerned about, then asks her to do him a small favor. He hands her an automatic pistol and asks if she'd be so kind as to run it down to Vic for cleaning, adding that he thought he saw Vic go into his room. Probably taking a nap, she replies. Smiling mischievously, Mr. B. suggests that she sneak up on him and surprise him. She agrees to the little prank, and heads downstairs as Charles the butler arrives with breakfast.

"Shall I butter your bread?" Charles asks.

As four shots ring out from the chauffeur's room, Mr. B. takes up his bread and knife. "No thank-you. There are still some things I can do for myself, Charles."

## THE LITTLE BLACK BAG

Broadcast December 23, 1970  
Teleplay by Rod Serling, based on  
the short story by C.M. Kornbluth  
Directed by Jeannot Szwarc

Dr. Fall (Burgess Meredith), Heppelwhite (Chill Wills), Gilling (George Furth)

*"For your approval, a painting which has to do with time. We talk centuries now, and what happens when men from one century send back items quite unbidden to men of another. We call this painting, 'The Little Black Bag.'"*

Gilling, a lower-level employee in a twenty-first century time-travel laboratory, has an unpleasant message to relay: a medical bag containing the latest instruments was accidentally sent back in time to the year 1970—and no, they can't retrieve it.

The bag is found by Dr. Fall, a discredited physician turned drunk/delirious/panhandler ("I went from being a Hippocratic healer to a hypocritical heel") and by Heppelwhite, another



Chill Wills and Burgess Meredith.

derelict. When a medical emergency arises in the neighborhood, Fall uses the bag to effect a miraculous cure, and continues to do so for others, along the way learning the incredible secrets of the bag. These include a scalpel which cuts only a set number of centimeters into the skin to remove only diseased tissue, immediately sealing the incision. His dream is to use the bag to better the human condition.

But Heppelwhite only sees the potential for immense profit. He wants to withhold the secrets and sell the bag to the highest bidder. The disagreement turns deadly, and Heppelwhite uses one of the bag's instruments to kill Dr. Fall.

Subsequently, he calls a meeting of surgeons and physicians to demonstrate his amazing instruments. He will show them how the scalpel cuts only so far into his throat and heals immediately. This he does ... unaware that in the twenty-first century, an alarm went off immediately after he killed Dr. Fall. Because the instruments have been used in a murder, a signal has been sent back to deactivate the instruments—which occurs just as Heppelwhite draws the blade across his throat.

The physicians depart, disgusted and annoyed—if he had to commit suicide, why not do it in private? The signal also reduces the bag and its contents to unusable slag, to be thrown away, its secrets lost.

## THE NATURE OF THE ENEMY

Broadcast December 23, 1970  
Teleplay by Rod Serling  
Directed by Allen Reisner

Simms (Joseph Campanella), Space Man (Richard Van Vleet), First Reporter (James Sikking), Second Reporter (Jason Wingreen), Third Reporter (Albert Popwell), Man (Jerry Strickler)

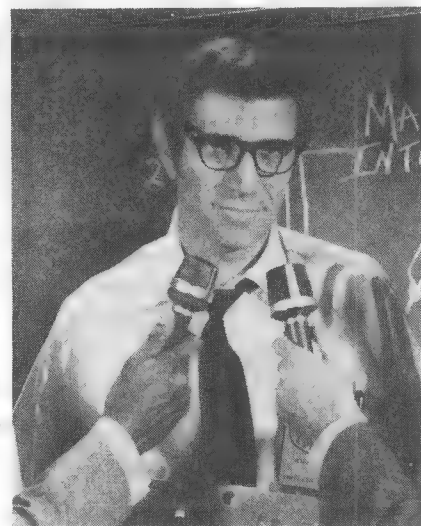


*"This offering is a landscape, lunar and low-keyed, suggestive perhaps of some of the question marks that await us in the stars—and, perhaps, pointing out the moment when we'll collect something other than moon rocks. This item is called 'The Nature of the Enemy.'"*

Project Settlement, a two-ship lunar colonization mission, has failed under strange and tragic circumstances. The first ship has crashed, and the crew of the second ship has vanished shortly after landing. Their last words to mission control were, "We are under—" The final word might have been "attack."

In response, Project Rescue is sent to the moon to investigate, while earthbound scientists headed by Simms deal with legions of reporters. Their pressing question: who attacked Project Settlement? Who is the enemy? "Could it have been the Russians? The Chinese?"

The rescue team finds only scattered wreckage of the first ship and no



Joseph Campanella briefs reporters as Richard Van Vleet explores the moon.

trace of the second's crew, but they do find a strange metal platform that the missing crew had constructed. At thirty feet by twenty-five feet, with a bar and spring mechanism, its purpose is a mystery. Suddenly the astronaut on the scene realizes what it is, but before he can relay that information, he screams. Communication is lost.

During a press briefing by Simms in which pictures of this strange platform are shown, one reporter makes a startling observation: "I swear—it looks like a ... a mouse trap!"

A short while later, communication to the lunar cameras returns, and a shocked mission control stares out at the enemy revealed: an ordinary household mouse—except that it's fifty feet high.

## THE HOUSE

Broadcast December 30, 1970  
Teleplay by Rod Serling, based on the short story by Andre Maurois  
Directed by John Astin

Elaine Chambrum (Joanna Pettet), Dr. Mitchell (Steve Franken), Peugot (Paul Richards)

*"A most hearty welcome to those of you whose taste in art leans toward the bizarre. Our first painting, submitted for your approval, is an item of real estate. But you won't find it advertised in the classifieds. Oh, it's light and comfortable and altogether well-heated, but there's a chill to the place. So bundle up when you look at this one. Our painting is called 'The House.' And this is the Night Gallery."*

Elaine Chambrum, undergoing treatment for depression and anxiety in a sanitarium, is a woman possessed of a singular, recurring dream, one she has had for years. In the dream she drives to a lovely country chateau, walks up the path to the front door, and knocks, only to drive away just as the door opens, never seeing who is inside.

Her psychiatrist, Dr. Mitchell, tells her it is a subconscious quest for permanence, and nothing to worry about. She is now well enough to return to the real world.

Not long after her release, she finds herself driving on that country road she has seen so often in her dreams—only this is not a dream. She turns off the road onto a private drive—and comes across her dream chateau,

precise in every detail.

Peugot, a realtor who is there checking on the house, shows her around Elaine discovers that she knows in advance the layout of every room, even though in the dream she never actually went inside. She also discovers that the house is for sale at an absurdly low price.

When asked why, Peugeot reluctantly explains that the house is haunted. But not in the conventional fashion; there have been no crimes on the premises, no acts of violence. Past residents have not even been able to coherently explain what they felt, or saw. Elaine undeterred by the house's reputation, buys it and moves in immediately.

Now settled into her new home, Elaine is dozing in the upstairs bedroom one afternoon, when she dreams once again of driving up to the chateau, of knocking on the door...

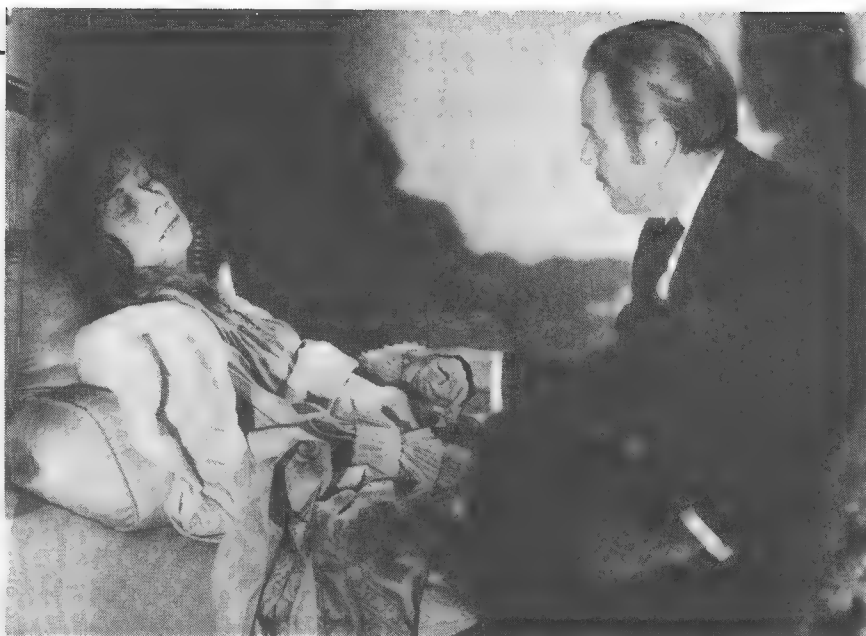
The dream is broken by the sound of a car pulling away. Confused, she goes downstairs and opens the door, only to find Peugeot driving up. He tells her that no other cars passed him on the narrow road.

Elaine, disturbed but not frightened, calls Dr. Mitchell and tells him that she has found her dream chateau, but that it is haunted by a daytime ghost. At that moment, outside, a car pulls into the driveway and a knock sounds at the door. She sets the phone down and rushes downstairs to the door. She screams, just briefly, at what she sees. Running back up the stairs, she picks up the phone. "I have finally met my ghost," she says, as her other self climbs into her car and drives away. "I am the ghost, doctor."

She hangs up the phone and returns to bed, and the dream begins again, and again.



Joanna Pettet.



Agnes Moorehead, Louis Hayward, and their shadows.

## CERTAIN SHADOWS ON THE WALL

Broadcast December 30, 1970

Teleplay by Rod Serling,

based on the short story

by Mary E. Wilkins-Freeman

Directed by Jeff Corey

Dr. Stephen Brigham (Louis Hayward), Emma Brigham (Agnes Moorehead), Rebecca Brigham (Rachel Roberts), Ann Brigham (Grayson Hall)

*"The least permanent, the most fleeting of man's proof of existence: his shadow. It comes and goes with light, hours of the day, point of the sun, angle of the moon. It is a quickly daubed and imperfect outline of a certain object at a certain given moment. This painting is called 'Certain Shadows on the Wall.'"*

Brigham House, a magnificently preserved Victorian relic, houses an equally well-preserved collection of valuable paintings and furniture. It also contains the four not-so-well preserved members of the Family Brigham. Rebecca and Ann are spinsters, content to wind down their last years in familiar surroundings. Dr. Stephen Brigham has left a shattered practice to attend to sick sister Emma, and to read to her from Dickens, over and over again, as their shadows—of her on her bed, he in his rocking chair—fall on the bedroom wall night after long night.

But in truth Stephen hates his ever-sick sister and what he perceives as her cloying, claustrophobic grip on the family. He tolerates her because the house and all the family fortunes are in Emma's name, to be divided up equally

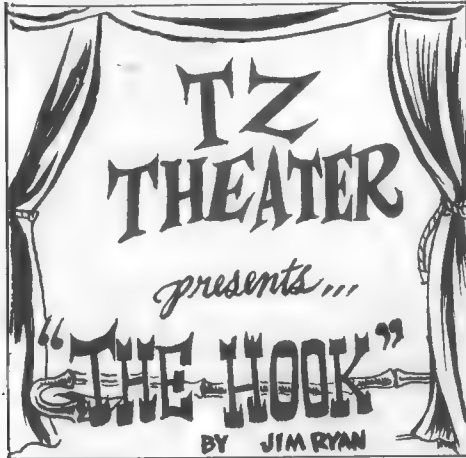
upon her demise. Therefore among the medications he administers to her is a powder that sister Emma suspects is not what it is advertised to be.

On the night Emma dies, Stephen rejoices. Now he can sell off the house, property, furniture, everything. But his moment of triumph is soured by an unsettling discovery—though Emma is dead, her shadow remains on the bedroom wall. The very sight of it sends Stephen into a fury, but despite all of his frenzied efforts, he cannot remove it.

His sister Ann, suspicious of Stephen's vehement reaction to a coroner's suggested autopsy, all but accuses him of being responsible for Emma's death. When she later discovers Rebecca about to take a "sedative" given her by Stephen, Ann urgently admonishes her to take nothing from Stephen, but doesn't explain why. Rebecca, a simple soul, can't understand Ann's concern, but does as she is told.

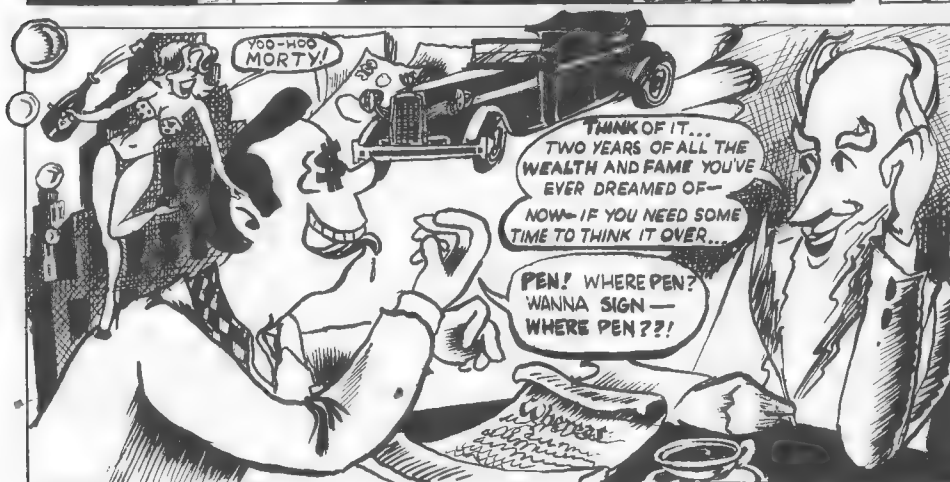
That evening, Rebecca brings Stephen a cup of tea, then goes to find Ann. Rebecca tells her that, knowing the great strain Stephen has been under, she put some of the sedatives he prescribed into his tea... without telling him, of course. He does so need his sleep. Stephen's death from the concentrated poison is almost instantaneous.

After Stephen's funeral, Rebecca and Ann return to the house in which they will live out the rest of their lives. Rebecca says that though she is truly sorry for what she accidentally did to her brother, she is glad that they are a family again. And she looks over to the wall where Emma's shadow sits motionlessly alongside a new shadow—that of Stephen in his rocking chair, holding a book in his hand, reading Dickens to his sister for all eternity. [E]













# And When the Sky Was Opened

*The original television script  
first aired on CBS-TV  
December 11, 1959*

Based on the story  
'Disappearing Act'  
by Richard Matheson

by Rod Serling



## CAST

Lieutenant Colonel Clegg  
Forbes.....Rod Taylor  
Colonel Ed Harrington...Charles Aidman  
Major William Gart.....James Hutton  
Amy Riker.....Maxine Cooper  
Girl in Bar.....Gloria Pall  
Bartender.....Paul Bryar  
Nurse One.....Sue Randall  
Investigator.....Logan Field  
Officer.....Oliver McGowan  
Medical Officer.....Joe Bassett  
Mr. Harrington.....S. John Launer  
Nurse Two.....Elizabeth Fielding

## ACT ONE

FADE IN:

### 1. EXT. SKY NIGHT

Shot of the sky ... the various nebulae  
and planet bodies stand out in sharp,

sparkling relief. As the camera begins a  
slow pan across the heavens—

### NARRATOR'S VOICE

There is a fifth dimension beyond that  
which is known to man. It is a dimen-  
sion as vast as space and as timeless  
as infinity. It is the middle ground  
between light and shadow—between  
science and superstition. And it lies  
between the pit of man's fears and the  
summit of his knowledge. This is the  
dimension of imagination. It is an area  
which we call the Twilight Zone.

The camera has begun to pan down until  
it passes the horizon and is flush on the  
opening shot (each week the opening shot  
of the play).

### 2. INT. HANGAR NIGHT LONG ANGLE SHOT LOOKING DOWN

On a shrouded aircraft just being covered

with a tarpaulin, part of a cracked wing  
and bent tail protruding, the wing bearing  
the remnants of an air force star. From  
behind this shroud walk two men in cover-  
alls. One holds a clipboard. An air force  
officer waits for them a few feet off. The  
voices sound hollow and echo through the  
emptiness of the room.

### OFFICER

How does she check out?

### INVESTIGATOR

Just as in the preliminary. The only  
damage evident is from the landing.  
She came in on her belly at something  
close to three-hundred miles an hour.  
Must have buckled part of the landing  
gear. That's why that wing looks the  
way it does.

All three men turn to look toward the ship.

### MECHANIC

It would be my suggestion, sir, if you  
want to unravel *this* mystery, you better



check with the crew, not with the aircraft.

OFFICER

(very thoughtfully)

And the crew can't tell us a thing.

The two mechanics look at him.

OFFICER

We had them on the radar screen for the first couple of hours, then they disappeared for *twenty-four* hours. Next thing anyone knew, there was an explosion on the desert and it was their aircraft.

He slowly shakes his head and walks around to survey the wing from another angle. He looks back at the mechanics.

OFFICER

They must have blacked out or something because they can't answer a thing. We were sort of hoping this aircraft could come through with the answers.

The camera starts a slow dolly up and away until we're looking directly down on the tarpaulin.

NARRATOR'S VOICE

Her name is X-6. Her type—an experimental interceptor. Recent history—crash landing in the Mojave Desert after a thirty-one-hour flight nine hundred miles into space.

(a pause)

And this is the story of the men who flew her!

DISSOLVE TO:

OPENING BILLBOARD  
FIRST COMMERCIAL

FADE ON:

### 3. INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR DAY

A long, bare, antiseptic hallway in which we see a couple of Army nurses pass and then pick up a shot of Colonel Clegg Forbes, a tall man in the uniform of an Air Force light Colonel. He pauses momentarily, staring down the corridor. The only way we can describe his look is that even his breathing at this moment is tentative. This is a bewildered, frightened, nerve-racked man. He starts to walk very slowly down the corridor and almost runs into a nurse who comes out of an adjoining room.

NURSE ONE:

Oh, hello, Colonel. How are you feeling?

FORBES

(forcing a smile, his voice perceptibly tight)

Fine, thank you, Lieutenant. How's Major Gart?

NURSE ONE:

Coming along just fine. Go on in, he'll be glad to see you.

FORBES

Thank you very much.

He starts to go on down the corridor.

Another nurse comes into the frame from behind the camera.

NURSE TWO

Is that one of the space pilots? The ones who crashed?

NURSE TWO

That's Colonel Forbes.

CUT TO:

### 4. INT. HOSPITAL ROOM DAY

Major William Gart lies propped up in bed reading some newspapers. There's another bed in the room which is empty. Gart is youngish—in his late twenties—attractive in a kind of rough, unpolished way. There's a tap on the door. He looks up as the door opens and Forbes enters. His face is wreathed in smiles when he sees Forbes.

GART

The prodigal Colonel. Welcome. Welcome. How about a shot of straight orangeade?

FORBES

(with kind of a forced smile, as he walks over to sit on the other bed)

How are you feeling?

GART

Are you serious? One more thermometer in my puss and I'm gonna absent myself without leave from this establishment. Well come on, come on—what's it like in the outside world?

FORBES

(a little grimly)

Just great.

GART

Well, tell me about it! Who'd you see? Talk to any of the guys?

(and then suddenly remembering)

What about the ship, Clegg? Did you check her over?

FORBES

They put it under wraps. They've got everybody but the President's Cabinet looking it over.

He lights a cigarette, his fingers shaking perceptibly as he puts the match out.

### 5. CLOSE SHOT GART

Noticing this.

GART

You go off on a toot did you? You don't look so good.

### 6. TWO SHOT

FORBES

Don't I?

GART

A little hung-over maybe. Got another one of those?

He points to the cigarette. Forbes rises from the empty bed, crosses over, gives Gart a cigarette and then starts to light it.

### 7. CLOSE TWO SHOT

Forbes lighting the cigarette. His hand trembles more than ever. Gart has to reach out and steady him.

GART

Steady, Colonel. You look like Xavier Cugat directing a rumba.

Forbes goes over to the window and stares out, Gart watching him. Forbes turns.

FORBES

Something's happened. Something I don't understand.

### 8. CLOSE SHOT GART

The smile fades as he looks into Forbes's face and sees the intensity, the concern. he makes a gesture to keep on talking.

GART

Go on.

### 9. TWO SHOT

FORBES

First . . . first I've got to get . . . to get oriented. I want you to answer some questions. When did I leave here?

GART

When?

FORBES

When did I get discharged from here? Yesterday morning?

GART

Don't you know?

FORBES

(half shouting)

I don't know anything any more! All I know is that . . .

(he turns away again rubbing his face, his voice quieter now)

All I know is I need somebody's help.

(then he recovers himself with an effort)

Around nine thirty yesterday morning I walked out of here, didn't I?

GART

About that time, I guess.

FORBES

Who did I walk out with?

GART

Are you kidding? How am I supposed to know who you walked out with?

FORBES

I mean when I left the room who was with me?

# And When the Sky Was Opened

GART

Nobody.

FORBES

(pouncing on this)

That's what I mean. You say nobody. His eyes scan the room and he sees one of the newspapers, strides across to it, grabs it, holds it up, looks at it, then whirls it around so that the front page is facing Gart.

FORBES

What's it say? Go ahead, tell me. What's it say?

## 10. CLOSE SHOT FRONT PAGE OF NEWSPAPER

The headline reads: TWO SPACEMEN RETURN, CRASH IN MOJAVE DESERT. Beneath this is a picture of Gart and Forbes taken before the flight.

## 11. CLOSE SHOT GART

He's obviously just humoring the other man now.

GART

In effect it says those two intrepid voyagers into the unknown returned from the unknown in a slightly dented aircraft.

## 12. TWO SHOT

FORBES

What about the picture? Who's in the picture?

GART

Lieutenant Colonel Forbes—if this is a literacy test I can assure you, though not a West Point graduate, I can read and write, count up to ten, and—

FORBES

(shouting again)

*Gart! Don't get wise with me now.* What's it say under the picture? Read it.

## 13. CLOSE SHOT GART

Again the smile fades. His eyes go down so that he's looking across at the newspaper and he reads.

GART

"Colonel Clegg Forbes and Major William Gart, taken just before their historic flight that ended in mysterious disappearance and crash."

## 14. CLOSE SHOT NEWSPAPER

As it is crumpled up and flung across the room.

## 15. MED. CLOSE SHOT FORBES

That's what you remember, huh? You and me, the X-6 taking off. About four hours up we black out and twenty-four hours later we wake up in a crashed

aircraft in the desert. We don't know where we've been or what's happened. Is that right?

GART

That's right. What's the matter? Isn't it right?

FORBES

(pulls a chair up close to

Gart's bed, his voice intense)

Bill, there were three of us in that plane. There was you and me and a Colonel named Harrington. Jack Harrington. He was thirty-six years old. He was my best friend. I'd known him for fifteen years and you'd known him for five. That ship took a crew of three and we were the three. And there were three of us brought back here to the hospital when they found us in the desert. You, me, and Harrington. Harrington and I were scratched. You got the busted leg. Yesterday morning they discharged Harrington and me. There were three beds in this room. We said goodbye to you yesterday morning and said we'd come back today to visit you. He and I left. We went out to do the town.

## 16. CLOSE SHOT GART

As he stares at Forbes. He takes the cigarette out of his mouth.

GART

(very softly)

Clegg, I don't know anyone named Harrington. He wasn't on the crew with us. The X-6 carried two men. You and me.

(he shakes his head)

Nobody named Harrington. Nobody else at all. When you walked out of here yesterday morning you walked out by yourself. There's never been three beds in this room. Only two. You and me.

(he butts his cigarette out in the ashtray by the bed and continues to stare at Forbes)

Something's happened to you. I mean it, Clegg. This is an effect of the crash or something. I think you better get looked after.

## 17. TWO SHOT

FORBES

I knew you'd say that.

(he rises)

I don't blame you for saying it either.

(and then his voice changes tone, he's almost pleading now)

Look, Bill, let me ... let me describe to you what I remember. I'll give you a breakdown chronologically of every-

thing that happened as of yesterday morning. First of all—

(he grabs the paper that's lying on the floor, holds it up in a bunched up ball)

I saw this paper. I saw it on the stands downtown, only it said the *three* men came back. There was a picture of you, me, and Harrington on the front page taken just before we took off.

GART

Clegg, that's impossible.

FORBES

*I know!* It must be impossible. You say there were two of us. Everybody else says there were two of us. That's all it says in the newspaper there.

(then his voice becomes much quieter)

But all I know is that there were three of us in that aircraft. There were three of us picked up in the desert and it was Harrington and I who left this room yesterday morning. We went out of the hospital together. We drove into town in a staff car together.

(then he looks up)

Bill, you ... you said goodbye to us from that bed and you said ... "Harrington, look after Forbes. He drinks too much." Those were your words.

## 18. CLOSE SHOT FORBES

As he talks.

FORBES

I stood right at that door and I laughed and Harrington went over there and made believe he was going to sock you. I swear to you, I swear to you, Bill ... *it happened! I know it happened.*

DISSOLVE TO OUT OF FOCUS:

FADE ON:

## 19. SHOT OF FORBES STANDING AT THE DOOR

Pan shot across the room over to Gart's bed. Harrington stands over him with a clenched fist and a big grin.

HARRINGTON

I'm gonna let you have it, fresh punk kid!

(then he turns to Forbes)

I'm gonna fix this baby's wagon! I'm gonna tell the medics he's a very sick cookie and he should be kept under observation for another seven years. And every Saturday night, Major Gart, the Colonel and I will phone you from whatever bar we happen to be in and if you're nice we'll even let you talk to our women.

FORBES

Well come on already! Didn't I ever tell you that I hate long goodbyes!

GART  
(laughs)

Go on, get out of here, both of you. Let me suffer in silent loneliness all by myself.

FORBES

(tosses a salute from the door)

Take care, Billy. We'll come in tomorrow to see you.

He opens the door. Harrington crosses over to it, stops, picks up a newspaper and holds out the headline which reads: THREE SPACE TRAVELERS RETURN, ALL ALIVE.

HARRINGTON

One time a fortune teller in a carnival in Des Moines said I'd be famous.

Gart throws a pillow at him. Harrington and Forbes go out of the room, laughing.

DISSOLVE TO:

## 20. INT. BAR DAY

As Forbes and Harrington enter and head straight for the bar. A couple of girls in a booth nearby point to them excitedly and whisper among themselves, obviously recognizing them. The bartender greets them with a giant grin.

BARTENDER

Aren't you guys Forbes and Harrington? Aren't you the guys who was up in space?

HARRINGTON

That and thirty cents should get us a beer apiece, shouldn't it?

The bartender, all smiles, turns back to the beer spigot and starts to pour two long glasses.

BARTENDER

You bet your life, but never mind the thirty cents! This is on the house.

(he slaps the two glasses down on the bar)

I don't get many celebrities here. Go ahead boys, drink hearty! I don't even mind your crackin' up the ship, and I'm a taxpayer!

They all laugh.

## 21. CLOSE SHOT HARRINGTON

As he turns away on the stool to light a cigarette and suddenly stops. The smile drains out of his face. For a moment there's a look of reflective thought, then deep concern. The match almost burns his fingers. he turns to stare at his reflection in the mirror. Beside it is the grinning, chuckling visage of Forbes, who is joking with the girls from the booth. He turns back to look at Harrington's reflection. Seeing the look, he turns to Harrington.

FORBES

What's the matter?

Harrington rubs the side of his face for a

moment, an instinctive gesture but significant of nothing in particular. He doesn't answer, just continues to look at himself.

BARTENDER

Something wrong?

FORBES

(holds up the beer in a toast)

I'll tell you that after I taste the beer.

Happy landings . . . whenever possible!

He starts to take a swig of his beer, turning back to Harrington as he does so. Harrington has a glass held out in the air. He's studying it. Suddenly it falls and lands with a crash on the ground, broken.

BARTENDER

(hurriedly)

That's okay. That's okay. That ain't the last glass of beer in the house, let me tell you. I'll get you another one right away, Colonel!

He turns to busy himself at the spigot.

## 22. TWO SHOT

FORBES AND HARRINGTON

Harrington's head is bent forward, his eyes down, his face invisible.

FORBES

(a hand on his shoulder)

You sick, Jack?

HARRINGTON

(shakes his head)

No. No, I'm not sick. I just got this . . . this funny feeling. Odd feeling. Never felt anything like it before.

FORBES

(concerned)

What kind of feeling?

HARRINGTON

Like . . . like I didn't belong here. Like if I were to let myself go I'd—

FORBES

You'd what?

HARRINGTON

(looks up, stares directly into Forbes' face)

Like I'd disappear.

(he blinks his eyes, and shakes his head, takes the beer the bartender has brought over to

him, forces a smile, holds up the glass)

Happy landings.

(takes a drink and in the middle of it the taut look

returns to his eyes, he puts the glass down)

I'm gonna call my folks.

He breaks away from the bar, starts across the room toward the rear.

FORBES

(calling after him)

Jack, you all right?

## 23. LONG SHOT HARRINGTON

On his way to the phone booth.

HARRINGTON

(over his shoulder)

Yeah, I'm all right.

## 24. MED. CLOSE SHOT PHONE BOOTH

As Harrington enters, drops a dime in.

HARRINGTON

I'd like to place a collect call, please, to Des Moines, Iowa. The residence of Mr. James Harrington. That's right.

(a pause, then reading off the phone number from the phone)  
Fletcher nine, oh-six-three-two. This is Colonel Jack Harrington. That's right. Thank you, Operator.

CUT TO:

## 25. MED. CLOSE SHOT THE BAR

Forbes is finishing his beer and in the process looks down at the broken glass by the stool.

FORBES

I'm sorry about that.

BARTENDER

Aw, forget it!

## 26. LONG SHOT OF THE PHONE BOOTH OVER FORBES'S SHOULDER

The door opens. Harrington beckons him. His voice is urgent.



# And When the Sky Was Opened

HARRINGTON

Clegg. C'mere! Will you c'mere quick? Forbes gets off the stool, turns to take one last swig of his beer. Again Harrington's voice, urgent, edged with a growing hysteria.

HARRINGTON

Clegg, C'mere!

CUT TO:

## 27. MED. CLOSE SHOT THE PHONE BOOTH

Harrington remains inside. Forbes comes into the frame.

FORBES

What's the trouble?

HARRINGTON

(turns to him, his face white)

I just called home. Just called my folks. My mother answered.

(there's a pause)

I told her it was me. And she said ... she said she didn't have any son named Jack Harrington. That's what she said, Clegg. And I asked to talk to the old man and when he got on he kept saying for me to hang up. He didn't want any practical jokers bothering his wife.

(another pause)

Clegg, he said he didn't have any son at all. What is this, Clegg? What's going on?

FORBES

(thoughtfully)

A gag maybe, or ...

HARRINGTON

(shakes his head)

No. No gag. It's a part of this feeling, Clegg. This feeling I've got that I shouldn't be here.

(and then-looking up  
toward Forbes)

That none of us should be here. It's as if ... as if maybe—

FORBES

(hoarsely)

Maybe what?

HARRINGTON

Maybe we shouldn't have come back from that flight. Maybe somebody ... something ... made a mistake and let us get through when we shouldn't have.

FORBES

(evenly but in a low voice)

Jack, you stay put. I'm gonna get you a good, stiff drink.

Harrington makes a move as if to get out, Forbes pushing him back into the booth.

FORBES

I told you to stay here.

He turns and starts back toward the bar.



## 28. TRACK SHOT WITH HIM AS HE WALKS

## 29. EXTREMELY TIGHT CLOSE SHOT

Of him as he stops abruptly and stares down at something.

CUT TO:

## 30. EXTREMELY TIGHT CLOSE SHOT NEWSPAPER

Lying on the table of a booth. A headline reads: TWO SPACEMEN RETURN, CRASH IN MOJAVE DESERT. Below it is the same picture of Forbes and Gatt, as seen in the hospital room.

## 31. CLOSE SHOT FORBES

As his hand instinctively goes to his head, a gesture of disbelief, of bewilderment. He turns abruptly to stare toward the phone booth.

CUT TO:

## 32. LONG SHOT THE PHONE BOOTH

The door is open, the inside black and empty.

## 33. CLOSE SHOT FORBES

As he whirls toward the bar. One of the girls from the table now sits across from the bartender. She smiles and winks.

GIRL

You got a beer here, honey.

## 34. TRACK SHOT FORBES

As he walks back to the bar, takes his seat. He looks up very slowly toward the bartender, then toward the girl, then to the empty stool beside him.

## 35. CLOSE SHOT EMPTY STOOL

## 36. MED. CLOSE SHOT FORBES

FORBES

Where's my buddy's drink?

## 37. MED. SHOT BARTENDER BARTENDER

Who?

FORBES

(trying to keep the tremor out  
of his voice)

My buddy's drink. Colonel Harrington. Where's his beer? The beer he had in place of the one he dropped on the— He points to the floor.

CUT TO:

## 38. CLOSE SHOT FLOOR

There are no remnants of the glass.

CUT TO:

## 39. GROUP SHOT

BARTENDER

We don't know who you mean, Colonel. You came in here alone.

## 40. CLOSE SHOT FORBES

FORBES

What? What did you say?

(and then on his feet, his voice  
loud, shrill, beyond control)

You're crazy! You're crazy, you know that?

(and then shouting)

You're crazy!

CUT TO BLACK:

END ACT ONE

## ACT TWO

FADE IN:

## 41. INT. HOTEL ROOM NIGHT FULL SHOT THE ROOM

Forbes paces back and forth. His uniform jacket is off, his tie at half mast. His shirt sleeves rolled up. The phone rings. He picks it up.

OPERATOR'S VOICE

(filtered)

I'm ready with Mr. Harrington, Des Moines.

FORBES

(forcing his voice down  
an octave)

Thank you. Hello?

MR. HARRINGTON

(filtered)

Hello? Who is this?

FORBES

Mr. Harrington? This is Clegg Forbes.  
(there's a silence at  
the other end)

You remember me, sir. I had Christmas dinner with you and your wife last Christmas.

(a pause)



You and your wife and . . . Jack.  
MR. HARRINGTON  
(filtered)

Who?

**42. CLOSE SHOT FORBES**

Sweat stands out on his forehead.

FORBES

Your son, sir. Jack.

MR. HARRINGTON  
(filtered)

I don't have any son named Jack.  
What is this, some kind of a gag or  
something? Who is this, anyway?

FORBES

(again having to throttle himself  
to keep his voice low and  
controlled)

Perhaps I don't have the right Harrington.  
Is this James Harrington?

MR. HARRINGTON  
(filtered)

That's right. I'm James Harrington. But  
I don't have any son named Jack and I  
never heard of you.

FORBES

You live on 43 Elm Street, sir?

MR. HARRINGTON  
(filtered)

That's right. Lived here all my life, too.  
Got two daughters. Both married. One  
lives in Sioux City. The other moved to  
Binghamton, New York, last year. And I  
should know whether I got a son or  
not, and I don't!

(a pause)

Hello? Hello?

Then there's a distant receiver being  
replaced. Forbes slowly replaces his own  
receiver, stands there staring across the  
room at nothing.

**43. MOVING SHOT FORBES**

As he walks over to the bed and sits  
down. Then he rises again, crosses the  
room and stops at the dresser looking at  
his reflection in the mirror. Then he  
hurriedly goes over to the phone and  
picks up the receiver, dials a number.

FORBES

Operator . . . I'd like Anderson Air  
Force Base, please. Commanding Officer's  
residence. That's right. Call me,  
will you?

He puts the receiver down and goes over  
to the dresser again, looks first at himself  
and then down at the dresser. He suddenly  
sees his hands in front of him, trembling.  
He clamps them together. There's a  
knock on the door. Hurriedly he goes over  
to it, flings it open. Amy Riker stands  
there, a beautiful girl in her mid twenties,  
tall, stately, charming, at this moment torn  
between delight in seeing the man in front



of her and the angry frustration of her long  
search.

FORBES

Amy, honey. Oh, am I glad to see you!  
Amy suffers an embrace, then pushes him  
away, enters the room and slams the door  
behind him.

Amy

And you, light Colonel Clegg Forbes,  
are a devious, miserable, two faced,  
two timing—

FORBES

Amy, I'm in trouble. You won't understand  
this, but I'm in bad trouble now. I  
need your help.

AMY

I have no doubt. You send me a  
telegram that you're getting out of the  
hospital in the morning and that you'll  
meet me at the station at two. Well, I  
was at the station at two buddy. I was  
also there at three. And I was still there  
at four. I could have had my pick of  
four Marines and an elderly gentleman  
who owns twenty-five thousand shares  
of AT&T. But there was a missing air  
force officer named Forbes who didn't  
have the simple courtesy of even leaving  
a message or something where he  
could be reached.

(she flings her coat  
on the chair)

Do you have any idea how many bars  
I've been to? How many hotel lobbies?  
Did it ever occur to you—

FORBES

(interrupting her)

Amy, please!

**44. CLOSE SHOT AMY**

As she looks at him as if for the first time.

**45. CLOSE SHOT FORBES**

Now he can say nothing. He can only look  
at her, pleading, supplicating.

**46. TWO SHOT**

AMY

Clegg, what's the matter? What kind of

trouble are you in? Please . . . I want  
to know!

Forbes turns away from her and goes to  
the dresser. He closes his eyes for a long  
moment, then opens them and speaks to  
her reflection in the mirror.

FORBES

I don't even know how to begin to tell  
you this. I sent you the wire because I  
did get discharged from the hospital this  
morning. Jack and I—

(he stops, whirls around  
toward her)

*It was in the wire. It was in the  
telegram!*

AMY

What was?

FORBES

I told you that Jack and I were getting  
out. I wrote down the wire. I wrote it  
down here someplace!

He rummages across the dresser top,  
throwing things aside and finally picking  
up the paper.

FORBES

Here it is! I wrote it right down here.  
See? It says "I'm getting out at  
nine—"

He stops abruptly, staring at the piece of  
paper, then slowly letting it slip out of his  
fingers and drift down to the floor. Then  
he looks at her for a long, long moment.

FORBES

Amy . . . I wrote that Jack and I were  
getting released from the hospital. Jack  
and I, understand? I wrote that Jack  
and I were—

He stops again, staring at her, looming at  
the perplexity on her face.

AMY

(in a very soft voice)

Clegg? Who's Jack?

FORBES

(in a whisper)

Don't you know?

AMY

(shakes her head)

I don't know any Jack. Who's Jack?

FORBES

There were three of us in the ship.

# And When the Sky Was Opened

Gart, me, and Harrington. Jack Harrington. And I was in a bar with him and he ... he just disappeared. But you know him, Amy. You know him! You've eaten dinner together. We've gone to dances together. We've double dated—

He stops again. She crosses over to him, touches his face gently.

AMY

Clegg, what's the matter with you? What's happening?

He turns away from her.

FORBES

I don't know. I swear to God I don't know—

At this moment the phone rings. He reaches over, grabs it, picks it up.

FORBES

(into the receiver)

Yes! Yes, put him on please. Hello, General. General, this is Clegg Forbes.

Yes, sir. Yes, that's right. General ...

(he rubs a free hand down his pants leg, afraid of asking the question, then blurting it out)

General, about Jack Harrington.

(there's a silence)

Jack Harrington, sir. You know Jack. We were in your wing at the field. We were with you nineteen, twenty months there. Harrington, sir.

(his face screws up almost like a little child about to cry, screams into the phone)

Jack Harrington! We were on the test ship together. Jack Harrington.

(he slams the phone, missing the hook, continues to sob the name)

Jack Harrington. Jack Harrington. Why doesn't anybody remember him?

He looks up at Amy who stands there helpless, desperately wanting to do something for him but not knowing exactly what she can do at this moment. Forbes is suddenly, illogically wild, like a man grasping at straws to retain sanity.

FORBES

I know! This is a gag, that's what it is. It's a big, earth shaking, highly complicated, fantastically conceived and executed practical joke. He's back at the bar, isn't he? Amy, that's where he is, isn't he? He's back at the bar.

With this he runs across the room, almost throwing himself against the door in his anxiety to pull it open. Then he does yank it open and goes out into the corridor, Amy following him.

AMY

(shouting)

Clegg! Clegg—

CUT TO:

## 47. INT BAR NIGHT

It's closed and dark. We're looking toward the front door, from inside the darkened room, as Forbes arrives, starts to kick and yank at the front door.

FORBES

(shouting)

Come on. I know you're in there, Jack. Come on, Harrington. I know you're in there!

Again he pounds and shoves and then there's the sound of smashing glass as he kicks open the front glass pane, reaches through, unlocks the door, forces his way in. He stands for a moment in the dark, and then much quieter, surveys the room.

## 48. PAN SHOT

### ACROSS THE ROOM

The dark silent bar, the empty booths, and finally the phone booth at the end.

## 49. ANGLE SHOT

### LOOKING DOWN

As he half-runs across the bar toward the phone booth.

FORBES

(shouting)

Jack? Harrington? Hey, Harrington!

(now his voice gets quieter and his walk slower)

Harrington? Harrington ... please ... please come back, will you? Please.

Now he's reached the phone booth.

## 50. MED CLOSE SHOT

### PHONE BOOTH

As he almost pitches into it, breathing heavily, his face buried against the telephone receiver.

FORBES

(under his breath)

Please ... please, Harrington.

DISSOLVE TO OUT OF FOCUS

FADE ON:

## 51. CLOSE SHOT

### GART'S FACE

### INT. HOSPITAL ROOM DAY

He's staring across at Forbes. Pan shot over to Forbes whose eyes are half closed. He stands there swearing; he has just finished the story.

FORBES

I don't know what I did then. I just ... I just ran, I guess. All the way down the street like a crazy man. Seems to me I heard some sort of a burglar alarm.

(shakes his head)

I just left Amy standing there. I don't even know what happened to her.

## 52. CLOSE SHOT

GART

As he slowly shakes his head.

GART

I don't know Jack Harrington, Clegg. I never heard of him before. I think he must be a ... an illusion or something.

FORBES

(about a ton of agony in this line)

*I know he's not an illusion.* I know for some reason ... he's been ... he's been yanked out of here! He's been taken away.

(he takes a step toward Gart)

He told me ... he told me he had a feeling maybe somebody or something made a mistake and let us get through when we shouldn't have gotten through. Maybe they're coming back to get us now. Maybe somebody from up there—

## 53. TIGHT CLOSE SHOT

### FORBES

His head has gone up to nod toward the ceiling and suddenly a look crosses his face, a pained, puzzled desperate look. He rubs his face, opens and closes his eyes.

## 54. TWO SHOT

GART

(concerned)

Clegg—

FORBES

I've got this ... I've got this oddball, idiotic feeling.

(he takes a step across the room)

Weird, Bill. Just plain weird like ... like I don't belong.

(he closes his eyes again, his fingers pushing at his temples, squeezing his face out of shape, opens his eyes, puts his hand down, stares at Gart)

I don't want it to happen.

(his voice rises an octave)

Bill, I don't want it to happen.

(now it's completely out of control, he screams)

I don't want it to happen.

He runs toward the door, wrestles with it for a moment, pulls it open.

GART

(shouts)

Clegg! Clegg!

The door is open now.

CUT TO:

## 55. LONG ANGLE SHOT

### LOOKING DOWN THE CORRIDOR

Forbes is racing away from the camera at a dead run.

**56. TRACK SHOT GART**

As he gets out of the bed and hops over to the door, still shouting.

(GART)

Somebody get him. Somebody get him!

Somebody—

CUT TO:

**57. LONG SHOT DOWN THE CORRIDOR SAME ANGLE AS BEFORE GART'S POV**

His back is framed in the picture. Over his shoulder we see the long, empty corridor with no one in it.

**58. CLOSE SHOT GART**

His eyes narrow. At this moment a nurse comes out of a room and walks smiling toward Gart.

NURSE ONE

Did you want something?

(and then suddenly realizing he's up)

What are you doing out of bed, Major? You shouldn't be out of bed. If the doctor saw you—

GART

Somebody's got to help him. Colonel Forbes. Somebody's got to help him right away.

NURSE ONE

Who?

GART

(stares at her)

Colonel Forbes. You know Colonel Forbes. He was brought in here with me—he was in this—

He turns to stare toward the room from the doorway.

**59. MED LONG SHOT THE CORNER OF THE ROOM**

Where the second bed was. There is no bed there now.

**60. CLOSE SHOT GART**

As he leans against the door jamb, burying his face against the wall, closing his eyes.

GART

Oh, my dear God. Oh, my dear God.

**61. MED LONG SHOT THE NURSE**

As she starts to run toward him, now very concerned.

NURSE ONE

Major, let me help you get back to bed.

Then I'll call the doctor. Here let me help you.

She reaches his side and has him lean against her as she helps him over to the bed. She deposits him down there, the rushes back across the room and out the door.



**62. LONG SHOT DOOR OF THE ROOM INT. CORRIDOR**

As she comes out, calling.

NURSE ONE

Major? Major Henderson. Major Henderson.

CUT TO:

**63. INT. GART'S ROOM**

He props himself up in bed and stares across at the empty corner where the bed was. He keeps shaking his head back and forth and then suddenly his eyes go wide. He looks horror struck and almost on the verge of losing his sanity as he sees something. Pan shot across the room to the newspaper lying face up, the headline reading:

SPACEMAN COMPLETES JOURNEY. LONE TRAVELER RETURNS TO EARTH—LANDS ON MOJAVE DESERT. Pan shot down the paper. We see a picture of Gart standing all alone, then the caption, MAJOR WILLIAM GART AIR FORCE PILOT JUST BEFORE HIS HISTORIC JOURNEY INTO SPACE. FIRST MAN TO ACCOMPLISH FEAT.

**64. CLOSE SHOT GART**

He closes his eyes.

CUT TO:

**65. LONG SHOT DOWN THE CORRIDOR LOOKING TOWARD END OF IT**

As the nurse comes with the Medical Officer. They're walking at a very leisurely pace, talking unintelligibly. As they get closer to the camera their voices become more intelligible.

MEDICAL OFFICER

And how are we fixed in this ward here?

NURSE ONE

Two empty rooms, sir. Room fourteen down there can take three occupants. There's room.

**66. TRACK SHOT WITH THEM**

As they go toward the door. The Medical Officer stops, opens the door and looks in.

The room is absolutely empty, no beds or anything. The Medical Officer closes the door, turns to the nurse.

MEDICAL OFFICER

I think this will do for the malaria patients. Order some beds up from Q.M., will you?

NURSE ONE

Yes, sir. Right away.

She turns and starts down the corridor. The Medical Officer pauses by the door, looks up at the room number and continues on in the opposite direction.

LAP DISSOLVE THRU TO:

**67. INT. THE ROOM DAY**

It's absolutely empty. No beds. No newspaper. No nothing. The window at the far end of the room is framed in the shot. We start a slow dolly in toward it.

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

**68. HANGAR INT. NIGHT**

**LONG ANGLE SHOT**

Looking up toward the ceiling. Slow pan down until we're shooting directly down to the middle of the room. There, neatly folded in a small square, is a section of tarpaulin lying on the floor.

NARRATOR'S VOICE

Once upon a time there was a man named Harrington ... a man named Forbes ... a man named Gart. They used to exist but don't any longer. Someone ... or some thing ... took them somewhere. At least, they are no longer a part of the memory of man. As to the aircraft ... the X-6 ... it's supposed to be housed here in this hangar. It hasn't been built yet. It's on a drawing board someplace.

(a pause)

And don't let anyone hear you argue the reverse or they'll question your sanity. If you have any questions about an aircraft and three men who flew her—speak softly of them ... and only in The Twilight Zone!

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END 17



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